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HISTORY

OF

LAKE CHAMPLAIN,

FROM ITS FIRST EXPLORATION BY THE FRENCH,

IN

1609,

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TO THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR

1814.

BY PETER S. PALMER.

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HISTORY

OF

LAKE CHAMPLAIN.

INTRODUCTORY.

General description of the Lake and of the most important points along its borders —Ancient and Modern names of places—Distances—Old Forts—Scenery—Original Indian name.

LAKE CHAMPLAIN extends from the 43° 30 min. to the 45° north latitude, and lies between Vermont and New York—the boundary line of those States running through its centre. The lake is about ninety miles in length, in a right line from North to South, with a length of coast, on each side, of about one hundred and twenty-five miles: its southern extremity, or head, being at Whitehall, and its northern near the boundary line between the United States and Canada. The lake varies in width from one-fourth of a mile to thirteen miles, and its waters cover an area of about five hundred square miles. It receives the waters of Lake George, at Ticonderoga, and discharges itself into the St. Lawrence, through the river Richelieu. There is no perceivable current in the body of the lake, and its waters, at ordinary stages, pass into the Richelieu with a velocity of only one-third of a mile per hour.

The Lake has two arms; one on the west side, near its southern extremity, called South Bay, the other, on the east side, near its northern extremity, called Missisco Bay. This last mentioned bay stretches into Canada and covers about thirty-five square miles. The area of country, drained into the lake, is variously estimated from seven thousand to nine

thousand square miles. It probably approaches nearest to the larger estimate. Numerous rivers and creeks discharge themselves into the lake, among the principal of which are, on the New York side, Wood Creek, the outlet of Lake George, the Bouquet, Great and Little Ausable, the Salmon, the Saranac, and the Big and Little Chazy rivers. On the Vermont side are the Poultney river, Otter Creek, and the Winooski, Lamoille and Missisco rivers. The lake is subject to a rise and fall of from six to eight feet during the year; the waters attaining their greatest height about the twentieth of May, after which they fall, gradually, until about the twentieth of September, when they usually reach the lower level of the remainder of the season.

Lake Champlain commences at the junction of Wood Creek with East Bay, in the town of Whitehall. The Indian name of this place was kah-cho-quah-na, "*the place where dip fish.*" Philip K. Skeene, an English Major under half pay, located here in 1763, and established a settlement at the mouth of Wood Creek, which was called Skeenesborough. This, for many years, was the most important settlement upon Lake Champlain. In 1773 it numbered seventy three families, all of whom, with but two exceptions, were Skeene's tenants. The name of the town was changed to Whitehall in 1788.

About two miles north of the village of Whitehall is South Bay, an arm of the lake seven miles long and one mile wide, extending to the south-west and separating the town of Whitehall from the town of Dresden. It was on the shores of this bay that the Baron de Dieskau landed, in 1755, with an army of fifteen hundred French and Indians, when marching against the English encampment at the head of Lake George.

Twenty-four miles below Whitehall is old fort Ticonderoga on the west, and Mount Independence on the east side of the lake. The waters of Lake George here discharge themselves into Lake Champlain through an outlet called, by the Indians, Cheonderoga; a word signifying "Noisy," and which

was applied in allusion to the falls on the outlet near its mouth. The French erected a fortress here in 1756, which they called Fort Carillon, and which was a place of great strength. Mount Defiance lies on the south side of the mouth of the outlet of Lake George, opposite Ticonderoga. The summit of this mountain is seven hundred and fifty feet above the lake, and within cannon shot of the old fortress.

Twelve miles north of Ticonderoga is Crown Point, called by the French *Point a la Chevalier*. Here the French built a fort in 1731, which they called Fort St. Frederic. This fort was destroyed by them on their retreat to Canada in 1759, and the same year General Amherst commenced a much larger work, the ruins of which are still to be seen.

Opposite Crown Point is a landing called Chimney Point, which was settled by the French, about the time they commenced building Fort St. Frederic, and was destroyed by them in 1759. So complete was the destruction of the settlement that when the English arrived, a few days after the retreat of the French, th y saw nothing but the blackened chimneys of the consumed houses, standing as grim sentinels amid the surrounding ruin. These chimneys were permitted to stand for years, and gave the name of Chimney Point to that locality ; a name it yet retains.

At the present day Lake Champlain is regarded as extending as far up as Whitehall, but among the early writers its head was knocked about in a manner most perplexing to modern readers. Kalm, who visited the lake in 1749, fixes upon Crown Point as the head, and speaks of that portion south of Crown Point, as "the river which comes out of the lake St. Sacrement to Lake Champlain." Doctor Thatcher, who was with St. Clair's army in 1777, considers the lake to reach no further south than Ticonderoga, and refers to South Bay as extending from that place to Skeenesborough "a distance of about thirty miles." By several the passage between Ticonderoga and Skeenesborough was called South River. Some writers have run the head of the lake as far

up as the falls of Wood Creek, in the present village of Whitehall, while others describe Wood Creek as running as far north as the outlet of Lake George. I refer, at this time, to this difference of opinion among the early writers to guard the reader against the confusion which it has frequently produced, and to explain an occasional discrepancy, apparently, between this work and the narratives of the events here collected.

Two miles north of Crown Point, and on the same side of the lake is Port Henry, and about eleven miles further north is North-west Bay, called Bay *des Rocher Fendus*, in Sauthier's map of 1779. The village of Westport stands at the foot of this bay. On the opposite side of the lake, about ten miles north of Crown Point, is a small bay in which Arnold grounded and burned his galley and five gondolas after the engagement with the English, of the 13th October, 1776. Otter Creek, called by the French *la riviere aux Loutres*, empties into the lake about seven miles north of this spot. The Creek is navigable for lake vessels as far up as the falls at Vergennes, a distance of eight miles. In this Creek McDonough fitted out the fleet with which he gained the victory of the 11th of September, 1814. During the last war a small breastwork was thrown up on the north side of the Creek at its mouth, where Lieutenant Cassin of the Navy, and Captain Thornton of the Artillery, with two hundred men, repulsed a large British force, sent out from Canada to destroy the American fleet fitting out at Vergennes. A few miles north, and on the opposite side of the lake, is Split Rock, called by the French *rocher fendue*. This rock has always been considered a great natural curiosity. It projects one hundred and fifty feet into the lake, and is elevated about thirty feet above the level of the water. The part detached contains half an acre, and is separated from the main rock by a channel about fifteen feet wide. The opposing sides are, by some writers, said to fit, the prominences of the one corresponding with the cavities of the other. The popular opinion is, that this rock was

separated from the main land by an earthquake,* but Professor Emmons, who examined it particularly, supposes the separation to have been occasioned by the wearing away or decomposition of a mass of rock containing a large amount of pyritous iron.

The lake between Split Rock and Thompson's Point, formerly called Point *Reglochne*, is not quite one mile wide. A Light-house has been erected by the general goverment, upon the main land, a few rods south of the rock. From this point the lake increases in width as it extends towards the north. Between Essex and Charlotte, four miles north, it is three miles wide. Opposite Burlington it is nine and three-quarters miles, and from shore to shore, opposite Plattsburgh, about thirteen miles wide.

Between Essex and Charlotte is Sloop Island, so called because an English vessel of war, during the revolution, fired upon it, mistaking, in a fog, the stump of a pine tree standing near its centre for the mast of a sloop. A short distance below Essex, on the New York side, is the mouth of the Bouquet river. At the falls, two miles up this river, Burgoyne encamped and gave a war feast to a party of about four hundred Indians, previous to his attack on Ticonderoga in 1777. Fourteen miles north-east from Essex and on the opposite side of the lake, is the village of Burlington. About midway between these two places are four small islands called the Four Brothers. They are called *Isle de quatre vents* on Charlevoix's map of 1744 and the Four Winds Islands on Sauthier's map. Two and one-half miles south of Burlington is Pottier's Point, called *Erkly's* by Sauthier. It forms the west side of the mouth of Shelburne bay. Three miles south-west of Burlington is Juniper Island, on which stands a Light-house erected in 1826.

*In the winter of 1663 there was a severe earthquake in Canada. "Lakes appeared where none ever existed before; mountains were overthrown; rivers sought other beds or totally disappeared. The earth and the mountains entirely split and rent in innumerable places,' creating chasms and precipices, whose depths have never been ascertained."—*Jesuit's Journal, Quebec*, 1663.

North-west from Juniper Island and near the west shore of the lake is Schuyler's Island, called by the French, *Isle Au Chapon*. Under this island Arnold collected his fleet on the morning of the 12th of October after his retreat from Valcour Island. A little to the south of this island is Douglass' Bay, called *Corlear* by the French and Indians. It is supposed by some that the humane and noble Corlear was drowned in this bay in 1666.

A mile to the north of Schuyler's Island is a bold promontory called Point Tremblean. At the foot of a small bay, formed by this point, stands the village of Port Kent, and about two miles to the north are the mouths of the Great and Little Ausable rivers, which empty into the lake near a sandy point, called point *Au Sable*. Six miles further north and half a mile from the main shore lies the island of Valcour, or Valeur, as it is sometimes called. This island is celebrated on account of a severe naval engagement fought near it between the Americans and English on the 11th day of October, 1776. One mile north of Valcour is St. Mitchell's, or Crab Island, and about three miles further north is the mouth of the Saranac river, called *Salasanne* on Sauthier's map. The village of Plattsburgh lies on both sides of this river at its mouth. Three miles east from Plattsburgh is Cumberland Head, on which a Light-house has been erected. Cumberland Head was called by the French Cape *Scoumonton* or *Scononton*. It extends about three miles into the lake in a southerly direction, and forms Cumberland Bay. This bay was the scene of McDonough's naval victory of the 11th of September, 1814. To the east of Cumberland Head is a large island called Grand Isle. The Lamoille river empties into the lake on the Vermont side near the south end of this island. Eight miles south of the Lamoille is the mouth of the Winooski. North of Grand Isle, and separated from it by a narrow channel, is another large island called North Hero. This is the *Isle Longue* of the French.

Twelve miles north of Cumberland Head, and lying be-

tween North Hero and the western side of the lake is the Isle La Motte. This island was named after Sieur la Mothe, a French officer who built a fort on the north end of the island in 1665, which he called Fort St. Anne. It was afterwards called Fort la Mothe. Kalm says this was a wooden fort or redoubt, standing on the west side of the island near the water's edge. It had disappeared when he passed thro' the lake in 1749, but he was shown the spot where it stood, which he describes as then "quite overgrown with trees." Opposite the north end of this island, and on the New York side, is the mouth of the Little Chazy river, and a short distance further north is the mouth of the Big Chazy. These rivers are called *Chasy* on a map of a survey of the lake made in 1732, and were originally named after Lieut. de Chasy, a French officer of distinction who, in 1665, was killed by a party of Mohawk Indians, while hunting in their vicinity. King's Bay lies north of the mouth of the Big Chazy. The north side of this bay is formed by Point Au Fer, which separates it from Rouse's Point Bay.

Point Au Fer was formerly separated from the main shore by a channel or deep morass connecting Rouse's Point Bay with King's Bay. Kalm says that the first houses he saw, after leaving Fort St. Frederic, were on the western side of the lake about ten French miles above St. Johns, in which the French had lived before the last war, but which were then (1749) abandoned. These houses probably stood either on Point Au Fer or near the mouth of the Big Chazy river. Prior to the revolution a brick house was built on this point, which was known as the "*White House*." It was fortified with an intrenchment and cannon by General Sullivan, at the time of the invasion of Canada in 1775, and was then considered as a very advantageous situation to command the navigation of the north end of the lake. Burgoyne, when he entered the United States, threw a body of troops into this place and it was retained by the British as a military post until after the Peace.

Opposite the northern part of Isle La Motte, on the Vermont side of the lake, is Alburgh Tongue, called by the French, *Point Algonquin*. The entrance to Missisco Bay is on the east side of this point. About eight miles north of Isle La Motte, also on the Vermont side, is Windmill Point. The French built a windmill here about the time of the erection of Fort St. Frederic at Crown Point, and had collected a small settlement near the mill; but the English having burnt the houses several times during their incursions into Canada, the settlement was at length abandoned. In 1749 nothing but the mill, which was built of stone, remained.

Opposite Windmill Point is the village of Rouse's Point, and one mile north is the terminus of the Ogdensburgh (Northern) Railroad. A connection is here formed between the Ogdensburgh and the Vermont & Canada Railroads by a bridge and floating draw. The boundary line between the United States and Canada, as fixed by the Ashburton Treaty of 1842, is about one mile below this bridge. This line is located 4,200 feet north of the true parallel of the 45° of latitude, and was so established in order to secure to the United States the site of an old fort commenced by that government soon after the close of the war of 1812.

The parallel of 45° was originally correctly located by the French, but, in 1766, Governor Moore and Brigadier General Carleton visited Lake Champlain and fixed the boundary between Canada and the Province of New York about two and a half miles below Windmill Point, which Governor Moore says was further to the northward than they expected to find it from the observations said to have been made by the French some years before. Moore's line was recognized as the true one until about the year 1818 when, on taking new observations, it was found to be too far to the north. As soon as the error was discovered the United States suspended work on the fort, and the unfinished walls were long known as "Fort Blunder." Since the treaty of 1842 a new and larger fort has been commenced on the site of the old

one, called Fort Montgomery. It is not yet completed.

Fort Montgomery stands at the foot of the lake. Here the river Richelieu commences and conveys the waters of the lake to the St. Lawrence. This river, for several years after the first settlement of Canada, was called the river of the Iroquois. Charlevoix says it was afterwards called the Richelieu on account of a fort of that name which had been built at its mouth, in 1641. This outlet of Lake Champlain is also called the Sorel or Chambly River.

Three and a half miles below the boundary line is Bloody Island, said to be so called on account of the murder of two lumbermen who were killed there by a party of soldiers sent out from Montreal to protect them from the Indians, on their return to the lake after having sold a raft of timber. Three-fourths of a mile below is Ash Island or *Isle aux Tetes*. One mile below Ash Island is Hospital Island and six miles lower down the river is Isle Aux-noix, where the French established a military post on their retreat from Crown Point in 1659. Thirteen miles below Isle Aux-noix is the village of St. Johns. This place was selected for a military post by Montcalm in 1758. It was occupied by the French prior to 1749.

About thirteen miles below St. Johns is the village and fort of Chambly. A fort was built here by the French in 1664, which was called Fort St. Louis. It was at first built of wood, but had prior to 1721 been replaced by a strong work of stone, flanked with four bastions, and capable of containing a large garrison. Fort Richelieu, which we have already stated to have stood at the mouth of the river, was afterwards demolished and a new fort built there by Mons. de Sorel, to which his name was given.

Lake Champlain is situate on the western side of a valley lying between the Clinton Mountains in New York and the Green Mountains of Vermont. This valley is from one to thirty miles in width and about one hundred and eighty miles in length, north and south. Its greatest depression has been found to be between Westport, Burlington and

Port Kent. Between Burlington and Port Kent the water of the lake is two hundred and eighty-two feet in depth. Professor Emmons found the depth, four miles north of Westport, to be three hundred feet, and he was told that soundings of six hundred feet had been made in other places in that part of the lake. The surface of the lake is ninety-three feet above tide, and, if Professor Emmons was not misinformed, its bottom at this last point is at least five hundred feet below the level of the ocean. It is the popular opinion that the waters of the lake are gradually subsiding, but I judge this to be a mistake for the reason that the soundings made seventy-five years ago do not differ materially from those of the present day. The water in the bays and along the shores is not as deep as it was formerly, from the washing of the banks and the deposit of earth, saw-dust and rubbish brought down by the creeks and rivers, but the surface is probably as high above tide as it was when the lake was first visited by Champlain in 1609. It is evident, however, from an examination of the adjacent shores and rocks, that the lake at one time filled a much larger portion of the valley than it does at present. Geologists suppose this entire valley to have been twice occupied by the ocean—but these speculations are of but little interest to the general reader, who, usually, is satisfied to take things as they have existed for the last five thousand years.

This lake has ever been celebrated for the beauty of its scenery and the bold and imposing configuration of the surrounding country. Upon the eastern side, the valley is wide and fertile, until we pass Mount Independence, going south, when the hills approach the lake, and, in some places, rise abrupt from its shores. On the New York side, the mountains in many places extend to the water's edge, as in the case of the Black Mountains south of Ticonderoga; the Kayadarosseras range which terminates with Bulwagga Mountain near Crown Point; the northern end of the West Moriah range at Split Rock, and of the Adirondac Mountains

at Trembleau Point, near Port Kent. These several ranges run from the lake in a south-westerly direction, increasing in altitude as they recede, and presenting a scene at once bold and beautiful; hill after hill rising gradually above each other, until the highest peaks attain an elevation of over five thousand feet. From the west the snow-crowned rocks of Mt. Marcy, old White Face, and half a dozen other giants among the hills, look down in solemn grandeur on the lake; while, on the east, the eye passes over green fields to trace along the horizon the clear blue outline of Jay's Peak, Old Mansfield's "Chin" and "Nose," and Camel's Hump, the poetic *Lion Couchant* of the French.*

The original Indian name of Lake Champlain has been a subject of much speculation and research. By some it is supposed to have been called Peta-wa-bouque, meaning *alternate land and water*, in allusion to its numerous islands and projecting points of land. Among the other names ascribed to the lake are Caniaderi—Garunte, *the door or mouth of the country;* Petow-par-gow, the *great water*, and Ska-ne-togh-ro-wah-na, *the largest lake*. These names, however, seem to have been selected more from the peculiar aptness of their meaning than from any known application to the lake itself. The early French writers do not refer to its Indian name, but speak of the lake as the passage that leads to the country of the Iroquois. Among the papers published in O'Callaghan's Documentary History of New York in relation to the old French Grants on Lake Champlain, is a letter from Governor Tryon to Lord Dartmouth, in which he states that this lake is called on Blain & Ogelby's and other ancient maps the "mere des Iroquois," the Richelieu river "riviere des Iroquois," and the tract on the east side of the lake "Iroscosia." From this it has been conjectured that the lake was called *Iroquois* by

*The following are the elevations, above tide, of some of the peaks seen from Lake Champlain.

On the New York side, Mt. Marcy 5,467 feet. Dix's Peak, 5,200; Nipple Top, 4,900; Whiteface, 4,900; Raven Hill, 2,100; Bald Peak, 2,065.

On the Vermont side, The Chin, 4,348; The Nose, 4,044; Camel's Hump, 4,083; Jay's Peak, 4,018; Killington Peak, 3,924.

the Indians. But this is explained by Charlevoix, who says that the name was given to the river and lake by the French because the Mohawk Iroquois were in the habit of passing through their waters in their incursions into the French plantations on the St. Lawrence. Champlain affixed his own name to the lake during his exploration of its shores in July, 1609. It was, at a later day, sometimes called "Lake Corlear," in honor of a Dutchman who, in 1766, saved a party of French and Canada Indians from being destroyed by a war party of the Mohawks, and who, the year after, was accidentally drowned there while on his way to Canada.

In the following chapters I propose to collect many facts connected with the history of Lake Champlain. No part of the United States is more interesting from its historic incidents. Every bay and island of the lake and nearly every foot of its shore has been the scene of some warlike movement —the midnight forray of the predatory savage, the bloody scout of frontier settlers, the rendezvous of armed bands or the conflict of contending armies. These stirring incidents extend in tradition far beyond the first discovery of the lake, and are brought down, by scattered and unconnected history, in an almost uninterrupted series of strifes and contentions, to the close of the war of 1812.

CHAPTER I.

Progress of discoveries by the French in Canada—Character of the Indian tribes—Champlain's visit to Lake Champlain in 1609—Battle between the Canada Indians and the Iroquois—Fort erected on Isle La Motte—De Courcelles' Expedition to the Mohawk River.

But little progress was made by the French in their American discoveries until the spring of 1534, when Jacques Cartier sailed from France with two small vessels and, in the month of May, reached Bonavista in Newfoundland. Cartier coasted around the north shore of the island and along the gulf of the St. Lawrence and, in September, returned to France. The following year he left France with three ships and, entering the mouth of the St. Lawrence, ascended that river as far as the St. Croix (St. Charles) near the Indian village Stadacona, (Quebec,) where he passed the winter. While his party were preparing their winter quarters, Cartier, with thirty-five armed men, proceeded up the river as far as Hochelaga, (Montreal,) near which he arrived on the second day of October.

"Hochelaga," says Warburton,* "stood in the midst of great fields of Indian corn; it was of a circular form, containing about fifty large huts, each fifty paces long and from fourteen to fifteen wide, all built in the shape of tunnels, formed of wood, and covered with birch bark; the dwellings were divided into several rooms, surrounding an open court in the centre, where the fires burned. Three rows of palisades encircled the town, with only one entrance; above the gate, and over the whole length of the outer ring of defence, there was a gallery, approached by flights of steps, and plentifully provided with stones and other missiles to re-

*Conquest of Canada, Volume 1.

sist attack. This was a place of considerable importance, even in those remote days, as the capital of a great extent of country, and as having eight or ten villages subject to its sway. The inhabitants spoke the language of the Great Huron nation and were more advanced in civilization than any of their neighbors; unlike other tribes, they cultivated the ground and remained stationary." This was Hochelaga in 1534. Seventy years later it had sunk into a decayed and unimportant place.

On the 11th of October Cartier rejoined his party at St. Croix and, the following spring, returned to France. Early in the spring of 1541 he again left France and, entering the St. Lawrence, sailed up that stream as high as the rapids of Lachine. The next spring he returned to Europe and soon afterwards died. No effort was made by the French to colonize Canada, after the return of Cartier and his associates, until the year 1603, when an armament was fitted out, under the command of Pontgrave, to make further discoveries in the St. Lawrence. Among the officers who accompanied this expedition was SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN, a captain in the French Navy and a native of Saintonge. Pontgrave and Champlain explored the St. Lawrence as far as the Lachine Rapids, which was the highest point reached by Cartier sixty-eight years before. In 1604 Champlain accompanied de Monts to Canada and again returned to France in the fall of that year.

In 1608, de Monts, who was at the head of a trading company, equipped two ships at Honfleur, and sent them out under the command of Champlain and Pontgrave, for the purpose of establishing the fur trade at Tadouassac. Champlain reached Tadouassac on the 3d day of June, and, after a brief stay, ascended the St. Lawrence, and on the 3d of July arrived at the ancient village Stadacona, which he selected as the site of the future capitol of Canada.

When the French first visited Canada the Indians residing north of the river St. Lawrence were engaged in war with

the Five Nations of Indians who occupied the territory south of the St. Lawrence. The Five Nations were a powerful confederacy, consisting of the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Cayugas, the Onondagas and the Senecas. They called themselves the Mingoes, and sometimes the Agamuschions, or United People.* The French called them the Iroquois; the Dutch the Maquas. Lafitau gives them the name of the Agonnousionni, as does Charlevoix, who says, "Leur nom propre est Agonnousionni, qui veut dire, Faiseurs de Cabannes; parcequ'ils les batissent beaucoup plus solides, que la plupart des autres sauvages."† In 1712 the Tuscaroras, a tribe who had been driven from the south by the English, was admitted into the confederacy, which was afterwards known as the "Six Nations."

Prior to the settlement of Canada by the French the Iroquois occupied all the country south of the river St. Lawrence and resided in numbers around Montreal and in the valley of Lake Champlain, but they had been driven off towards Lake Ontario by the Adirondacks, who lived near the Three Rivers. The success of the Adirondacks was of short duration, for soon afterwards they, in their turn, were driven from their ancient seats to a safer position below Quebec.‡ In 1608 the Iroquois resided upon the banks of the Mohawk and in several villages to the west of that river. They claimed the whole country lying on both sides of Lake Champlain, as far north as the St. Lawrence. The northern bank of the St. Lawrence was held by the Algonquins, the ancient and inveterate enemies of the Iroquois. The Hurons, a numerous nation residing west of Lake Ontario, were in alliance with the Algonquins and joined them in their wars against the Iroquois.

The Iroquois were powerful, politic, warlike and courageous. They have been termed among Europeans the Romans of the West.‖ Charlevoix says the name of Iro-

*Governor Clinton's discourse before the N. Y. Historical Society.
†Charlevoix, Tom 1.
‡Gordon.
‖Warburton, Vol. 1.

quois was formed from the Indian *Hiro*, which means, *I have said*, "J'ai dit," with which they always finished their speeches, and *de koue*, a word often used by them and which, when pronounced with a drawl was a cry of grief, and, when spoken short and quick, one of exultation.* They lived in villages, around which they had extensive cultivated fields. These villages were enclosed with strong quadruple palisades of large timber, about thirty feet high, interlocked with each other, with an interval of not more than half a foot between them. On the inner side of the palisades were galleries in the form of parapets defended with double pieces of timber.† The Algonquins were a warlike nation and the most polished of the northern tribes. They were a migratory people, disdaining the cultivation of the soil and depending altogether on the produce of the chase. The Hurons had some slight knowledge of husbandry, but were more effeminate and luxurious than the other tribes, and inferior in savage virtue and independence.‡ They lived in villages, of which the nation possessed twenty, but which were inferior in construction and strength to those of the Iroquois.

When Champlain landed at Quebec he found the Algonquins and Hurons engaged in active war with the Mohawks, one of the oldest and most powerful branches of the Five Nations. Learning, from some Indians who visited his encampment in the winter, that they intended an inroad into the country of their enemy in the course of the approaching summer, he determined to accompany them, and, by that means, not only explore a river and large lake through which the war party would pass, but by his powerful assistance strengthen the friendship which then existed between the French and the surrounding Indians. For this purpose, on the 18th of April 1609, he left Quebec on board a pinnace accompanied by a small party of followers, and as-

*Charlevoix, Tom 1.

†Champlain's Voyages de la Nouv: France.

‡Warburton, Vol. 1.

cending the St. Lawrence as far as the mouth of the Richelieu, passed up that stream to the foot of the rapids near Chambly. Here a war party of sixty Algonquins and Hurons soon after joined him, and commenced preparations for the incursion.

It would seem that it was Champlain's intention to have taken his whole party with him, but the men, intimidated by the small number of the Indians or from some other cause, refused to proceed any further, and, after the strongest appeals on the part of Champlain, but two would accompany him. With these alone he determined to join the Indians on their long and perilous expedition. All their arrangements being completed, Champlain and his two companions, on the 2d of July, embarked with the Indians in twenty-four canoes and that day proceeded up the river to a point about nine miles above the island of St. Theresa, where they encamped for the night. The next day they continued on as far as the lake, which they entered on the following morning, and coasted along its west shore until they came within two or three days journey of the place where they expected to meet the enemy. After this they traveled only by night, each morning retiring into a barricaded camp to pass the day. The party advanced with the utmost caution, keeping their canoes close together, and making no noise which might be heard by the enemy should they happen to be near. During the whole journey they used no fire but lived upon dried Indian meal soaked in water.

Champlain, in his account of this expedition, particularly refers to the superstition of the Indians and the importance they attach to dreams.* Whenever he awoke they would eagerly inquire whether he had dreamed of or seen their

*The Indian trusts to his dreams and invariably holds them sacred. Before he engages in any important undertaking, particularly in war, diplomacy, or the chase, the dreams of the principal chiefs are carefully watched and examined; by their interpretation his conduct is guided. In this manner the fate of a whole nation has often been decided by the chance vision of a single man.—*Conquest of Canada, Volume* 1, *page* 192.

enemies. One day, while the party lay concealed near Crown Point, Champlain fell asleep and thought he saw the Iroquois drowning in the lake within sight of the encampment. On awaking he related the dream to the Indians, which, he says, "gained such credit among them that they no longer doubted but they should meet with success." That same night about ten o'clock, while proceeding cautiously along, they met a war party of the Iroquois, who were passing down the lake in canoes.

As soon as the two parties discovered each other the Iroquois hastened to the shore and, having first secured their canoes, began to cut down trees and form a barricade. The others put out towards the centre of the lake and proceeded to fasten their canoes together, and then secured them, with poles, in a position within arrow-shot of the barricade. Two canoes were then sent towards the shore to inquire whether the Iroquois wished to fight, who answered they did but proposed, as it was then dark, that the battle be deferred until morning. To this the Algonquins and Hurons agreed and both parties passed the night in singing and taunting their rivals of cowardice and imbecility. Champlain and his two companions were equipped in light armor, and each carried an arquebus. They were placed in different canoes and kept themselves concealed from sight, lest the Iroquois might be alarmed at their appearance and decline the combat.

On the following morning an engagement took place which is thus recorded by Champlain.* "The moment we landed they (the Algonquins and Hurons) began to run about two hundred paces towards their enemies who stood firm, and had not yet perceived my companions, who went into the bush with some savages. Our's commenced calling me in a loud voice, and making way for me, opened in two, and placed me at their head marching about twenty paces in advance, until I was within thirty paces of the enemy. The moment they saw me they halted, gazing at me and I at them. When

*Voyages de la Nouv: France.

I saw them preparing to shoot at us, I raised my arquebus, and aiming directly at one of the three chiefs, two of them fell to the ground by this shot, and one of their companions received a wound of which he died afterwards. I had put four balls in my arquebus. Our's on witnessing a shot so favorable for them, set up such tremendous shouts that thunder could not have been heard; and yet, there was no lack of arrows on one side and the other. The Iroquois were greatly astonished seeing two men killed so instantaneously, notwithstanding they were provided with arrow-proof armor woven of cotton thread and wood; this frightened them very much. Whilst I was re-loading, one of my companions in the bush fired a shot, which so astonished them anew, seeing their chiefs slain, that they lost courage, took to flight and abandoned the field and their fort, hiding themselves in the depth of the forests, whither pursuing them I killed some others. Our savages also killed several of them and took ten or twelve prisoners. The rest carried off the wounded. Fifteen or sixteen of ours were wounded by arrows; they were promptly cured."

This battle was fought on the 30th of July, near what Champlain describes as "the point of a Cape which juts into the lake on the west side." Some writers have located the battle-ground on Lake George. Doctor Fitch* thinks it took place upon one of the points of land in the town of Dresden or Putnam, south of Ticonderoga; but, from an examination of Champlain's map of New France,† it is evident that the engagement took place somewhere between Crown Point and Lake George, probably in the town of Ticonderoga.

As soon as the victorious party had gathered the weapons and other spoils left behind by the Iroquois, they embarked on their return for Canada. After proceeding about eight leagues down the lake they landed, after night fall, when the

*Historical Survey of Washington County.

†A copy of this map will be found in Vol. 3 of O'Callaghan's Documentary History of New York.

Indians put one of their prisoners to death with the most horrible and protracted tortures. The rest of their prisoners were taken to Canada. At the rapids of the Richelieu the party separated and the Indians returned to their homes, well satisfied, says Champlain, with the result of the expedition and uttering strong professions of gratitude and friendship for the French.*

The above is, in substance, Champlain's own narrative of the first visit of civilized man within the limits of the state of New York. Two months later Henry Hudson entered New York Bay and ascended the North River as far as the present village of Waterford.† Thus were the northern and southern sections of the state almost simultaneously explored by the European. When these two celebrated men first looked upon the clear pure waters of New York and wondered at the grandeur of its mountains and the beauty of its gigantic forests, little did they think that, for nearly two centuries, those scenes would be rendered horrible by the bloody contest of ambitious colonists, or the midnight foray of the ruthless savage. As little could they have foreseen that, within less than half a century longer, those valleys would be filled with rich and populous cities, thriving villages and fertile fields or that that lake and river would bear upon their waters a commerce equal to that then belonging to the nations they so proudly represented.

After the departure of the Indians Champlain returned to Quebec. He continued as Governor of Canada until 1629, when he surrendered the government to the English and returned home. In 1632 Canada was restored to France, and,

*Charlevoix and most English writers say that Champlain, on this expedition, ascended a rapid and passed into another lake afterwards called Lake St. Sacrement. Champlain, in his account, says the Indians told him of a waterfall and of a lake beyond, *three or four leagues long*, and adds that he saw the waterfall, but says nothing of the lake. Had he explored the lake he would not have represented it as only three or four leagues long.

†Hudson first entered New York Bay in September 1609. He sailed up the river as far as Albany and embarking in small boats continued on to Waterford, where he arrived on the 22d of that month.

the next year, Champlain was re-appointed Governor of the colony; which situation he continued to hold until his death, at Quebec, in 1635.

Champlain was brave, high-minded, active and generous, and eminent for his christian zeal and purity. "The salvation of one soul," he often said, "is of more value than the conquest of an enemy." During his life he fostered christianity and civilization and succeeded in planting them among the snows of Canada. The only great mistake of his administration was an injudicious interference in the quarrels between the Indians. By this means he directed the hostility of the warlike Iroquois against the French, and created an implacable hatred on the part of that powerful nation, which time could not heal, nor the blood of a thousand victims soften.

Mons. de Montmagny succeeded Champlain as Governor of New France. In 1641, he erected a fort at the mouth of the Richelieu, as a protection against the repeated inroads of the Indians by the way of Lake Champlain. M. de Montmagny was succeeded by M. D' Ailleboust, in the course of whose administration, of three years,* the Iroquois made several inroads into the territory of the Hurons and drove them from the fertile banks of the Ottawa. These victories of the Iroquois rendered them more audacious than ever. Breaking a solemn treaty of peace made with M. de Montmagny several years before, they again appeared among the French settlements, despising forts and barricades and insulting the humble husbandman with impunity. In their attacks no force was too strong for them to overcome; no hiding place too secret for them to discover. So great, at length, became the audacity of these savages that they suddenly fell upon a body of Algonquins, under the very guns of the fortress of Quebec, and massacred them without mercy.

*The Governors of New France held office for three years only; in consequence of a decree that no one man should hold the government of a colony for more than that length of time.—Warburton.

A dark and unpropitious gloom hung over the affairs of the colony until the arrival of the Marquis de Tracy, as viceroy, in 1664. M. de Tracy brought with him the Carignan-Salieres, a veteran regiment which had greatly distinguished itself in the wars against the Turks. Immediately on the arrival of these troops they were sent, accompanied by the allied Indians, against the Iroquois and soon cleared the country of those troublesome enemies. Having established peace throughout the colony, M. de Tracy prepared to adopt measures to make that security permanent. The hostile Indians had been accustomed to approach the French settlements by the way of Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River, and to effectually block up this avenue three Captains of the Carignan regiment, M. de Sorel, de Chambly, and de Salieres, were ordered to erect forts on that river.

M. de Sorel built a fort at the mouth of the river, on the site of old fort Richelieu erected by de Montmagny in 1641. M. de Chambly built a fort at the foot of the rapids, in the present village of Chambly, which he called fort St. Louis, and M. de Salieres built one nine miles above, which he named St. Theresa, because it was finished on that Saint's day. The next year M. de La Mothe, another Captain in the Carignan regiment, was sent to Lake Champlain to build a fort on an island near the lower end of the lake, which was intended to serve as a place of rendezvous, "from which continual attacks could be made on the enemy." This fort was called St. Anne.

As soon as tidings of the erection of these forts reached the Iroquois, three of those tribes sent deputies to Quebec with proposals of peace. M. de Tracy gave them a friendly audience and sent them back with valuable presents.

About the same time he determined to invade the country of the Mohawks, who with the Oneidas, remained stubborn and inflexible, and inflict summary punishment upon them for their former insolence and treachery. With this view M. de Courcelles was ordered to fit out a military expedition,

with the utmost dispatch. On the 9th of Jan., 1666, he started with three hundred men of the regiment of Carignan-Salieres, and two hundred volunteers, *habitans*, for Fort St. Theresa, which had been designated as the place of rendezvous. The weather was so severe that before they had advanced three days journey many of the men would have perished, had they not been carried along by their companions. On the 24th Sieurs de la Fouille, Maximin and Lobiac, Captains of the Carignan regiment, joined the army with sixty men and some *habitans*, but before they reached St. Theresa so many men had become disabled that it was necessary to withdraw four companies from the forts on the Richelieu to supply the vacancies in the ranks.

On the 30th of January de Courcelles marched out of Fort St. Theresa at the head of five hundred men, and passing the lake on the ice, crossed the country towards the Mohawk villages. The snow was nearly four feet deep, and the men were obliged to use snow-shoes to pass over it. As horses could make no progress through the deep snow, a large number of slight sledges were prepared which were loaded with provisions and dragged along by the men, or by large dogs brought on for that purpose. Each man, including all the officers, carried upon his back from twenty-five to thirty pounds of biscuit or other supplies.* The intention of the French had been to march direct against the Mohawk villages, but having lost their way, through the ignorance of their guides, they turned too far to the south, and on the 9th of February arrived within two miles of Schenectady, where they encamped. Here they were met by a small party of Mohawks, who, pretending to retreat, were carelessly pursued by sixty of the French Fusileers, who were thus drawn into an ambuscade of about two hundred Indian warriors securely posted behind the trees of the forest. At the first volley of the Indians eleven of the French, including a Lieutenant, were killed and several wounded. The fusileers discharged

*Relations de ce qui s'est passe en la Nouv · France en annees 1665—6

their pieces and immediately fell back upon the main body of the army, while the Indians retired with a loss of three killed and six wounded, taking with them the scalps of four Frenchmen, which they exhibited in the streets of Shenectady. It is said the whole company of fusiliers would have been massacred, but for the intercession of Corlear, a Dutchman greatly beloved by the Mohawks, who humanely interceded in their behalf.*

Information of the approach of the French having been sent to Fort Albany by the authorities of Schenectady, three of the principal citizens were sent to M. de Courcelles to inquire what were his intentions in invading the country belonging to the English. De Courcelles replied that he had no desire to molest the English in their possessions, but came solely to seek out and punish the Mohawks, who were the unrelenting enemies of the French. He also represented to them the state of his army, worn out with fatigue and hunger, and requested that they would sell him provisions and consent that he might send his wounded to Albany. The English readily agreed to do as he desired, and the next day seven wounded Frenchmen were sent to Albany. The inhabitants also carried large quantities of beans, bread and other provisions to the French camp, for which they were liberally paid.

De Courcelles, having rested his men until the 12th, suddenly broke up his camp and hastily retraced his steps to Lake Champlain and from thence to Canada. The Mohawks, who were at their first village, learning the retreat of the French, immediately started in pursuit and followed them as far as the lake, where they took three prisoners and found the bodies of five men who had perished of cold and hunger.†

The expedition of M. de Courcelles, although it had failed

*Gordon says the whole of de Courcelles party would have been destroyed but for the intercession of Corlear.

†London Document II. In 1st Volume Documentary History of New York.

to reach the Mohawk villages, through the mistake of the guides, caused much anxiety to the Indians; nor were their fears diminished by the information communicated by the prisoners that M. de Tracy intended to send a much larger force into their country the next summer. To avert the threatening storm, they determined to make immediate overtures for peace. Accordingly, in June, 1666, ten Ambassadors from the Mohawks, accompanied by a delegation of Oneidas, repaired to Quebec, asking protection for their people and a renewal of the old treaties of peace. M. de Tracy at first refused to receive their wampum belts, but perceiving that this caused them great anxiety, he finally accepted their proposals. But while the negotiations were in progress at Quebec, and just as the French viceroy began to congratulate himself upon the future security of his colony, a tragedy took place on Lake Champlain, which for the time defeated his plans and destroyed all his confidence in the professions of the Indian deputies.

Fort St. Anne was at this time garrisoned by several companies of the Carignan regiment, one of which was commanded by Sieur de Chasy, a nephew of the viceroy. Apprised of the friendly professions of the Mohawks and their desire for peace, the ambassadors of that nation having passed the fort on their way to Quebec, the officers relaxed their usual vigilance and amused themselves by fishing and hunting in the neighborhood. While a small party of French officers and soldiers were thus engaged, they were suddenly attacked by a band of Mohawk Indians, who killed two Carignan Captains, de Travesy and de Chasy, and took several volunteers prisoners. Information of this treacherous act was immediately sent to Quebec, and one of the Indian deputies had the vain audacity to boast, at M. de Tracy's table, that he had slain the officers with his own hand. The Indian was seized and strangled on the spot; and M. de Tracy, breaking off all negotiations, sent M. de Sorel, at the head of three hundred men, against the Mohawk villages,

with orders to overrun the whole country and to put every inhabitant to the sword. M. de Sorel had by forced marches crossed Lake Champlain, and was pushing rapidly towards the Indian villages, when he was met by a new deputation from the Mohawks, bringing back the Frenchmen taken prisoners near Fort St. Anne and offering every satisfaction for the murders committed there.

Still desirous to secure peace, and in the belief that the demonstration already made had over-awed the Indians, M. de Sorel retraced his steps to Quebec, where negotiations were again resumed with such success that, on the 12th of July, a treaty was signed by which the Indians agreed to restore the Canadian, Algonquin and Huron prisoners in their hands, and to become the fast friends and allies of the French. On the other part, the viceroy promised to extend his protection over their nation, "to send some black gowns (Jesuit missionaries) among them" and "to open a trade and commerce by the lake du Saint Sacrement."*

*Relations, en annees, 1665—6.

ERRATA.—On page 16, instead of *Tadouassac*, read Tadoussac—and on page 17, instead of *Agonnousionni*, read Agonnonsionni.

CHAPTER II.

M. de Tracy collects a large army at Isle La Motte—He marches against and destroys the Mohawk villages—Condition of Canada—De Callieres' project for the invasion of New York—Burning of Schenectady—Captain John Schuyler's attack on Fort Laprairie—Major Philip Schuyler's expedition to Canada—de Frontenac marches against the Mohawks.

War is the delight of the savage. It furnishes an excitement necessary to his happiness. Without it he pines and wastes in insufferable quiet; a restless, miserable being. To obtain relief he hesitates not to violate the most sacred treaties or break the ties of long continued friendship. "We must either," says Sir William Johnson,* "permit these people to cut each other's throats, or risk their discharging their fury on our traders and defenceless frontiers."

M. de Tracy soon found that he could only secure permanent peace and quiet to the colony, by an expedition into the Mohawk country, of such force as to make that implacable nation feel the destructive power of the French Arms. With such an army he now prepared to march against the Indian villages on the Mohawk River. Never had Fort St. Anne presented so lively a scene as was beheld there in September, 1666. Within the fort and close under its defences were collected six hundred veterans of the Carignan-Salieres, while on the main shore opposite lay encamped an equal number of volunteers, *habitans* of the colony. One hundred Huron and Algonquin warriors, bedaubed with paint and bedecked with feathers, stalked majestically among the crowd, and rendered the night boisterous with their war songs and dances. The labor of preparing this expedition, the largest which had yet been collected on Lake Champlain, was confided to M. Talon, Intendant of New France.

*Letter to Earl of Hillsborough.

On the 1st of October M. de Courcelles started from the fort at the head of four hundred men. On the the 3d the main body of the army moved off under the immediate command of M. de Tracy, who despite his advanced years, was determined to lead the expedition in person. Four days after Sieurs de Chambly and Berthier followed with the rear guard. The progress of the army, after it reached the upper end of the lake, was slow and laborious, as the men dragged with them two small pieces of cannon and three hundred bateau or bark canoes, which had been provided for crossing the lakes and rivers on the route. It was de Tracy's intention to surprise the Indians before they should learn of his advance; but, notwithstanding the great caution of the troops, the Mohawks received timely information of their approach, and, abandoning the villages, secreted themselves in the surrounding forests, or ascended the mountains, and from a distance fired random shots at the soldiers. The French found the cabins of this nation larger and better built than any they had seen elsewhere. The villages were surrounded by a triple palisade twenty feet in hight, newly repaired and strengthened and flanked by four bastions. Large quantities of Indian corn, beans and other provisions were stored away in magazines sunk in the ground, and numerous tanks, made of bark and filled, stood about the enclosure to supply the inhabitants with water, and to extinguish fires when necessary. Everything indicated that the Indians intended to make a strong defence, had they not been intimidated by the strength and numbers of the invaders. But as it was, not a warrior or able-bodied man was to be seen; they had fled, leaving behind only the women and a few old and decrepit persons, too feeble to escape. These M. de Tracy retained as prisoners. In this manner he passed through the whole country until he reached the most remote Mohawk village, which he burned. After celebrating Mass and returning thanks to God for the success of the enterprise, the French retraced their steps towards Canada, on their

way burning the other villages and destroying all the provisions they could not carry off.*

While the army was passing near Schenectady on its return, M. de Courcelles called upon Corlear, who it will be remembered had rendered the French such signal service the preceding winter, and invited him to visit Canada. On Lake Champlain the fleet of boats encountered a heavy storm, which capsized two canoes with eight persons on board, all of whom were unfortunately drowned. Among the persons thus lost were Corlear and Lieut. Sieur de Luges, an officer of great merit and distinction.†

The expedition of M. de Tracy effectually subdued the Mohawks, and, for the next twenty years, secured the settlements on the St. Lawrence from the inroads of that nation. But Canada was not destined long to enjoy the blessings of profound peace. Ten years had scarce elapsed before she found herself again engaged in a destructive war with the Western Iroquois, which continued, with short intervals of truce and with varied success, until the treaty of Utrecht in 1713. For several years after the commencement of this war the English colonists were on friendly terms with those of Canada, and repeatedly refused to aid the Western Iroquois in their controversy with the French. They were equally careful to do nothing to prevent it. "The Five Nations are a bulwark between us and the French," said Governor Dongan.‡ That bulwark was strongest in war. In times of peace it might crumble into atoms.

The accession of William and Mary to the throne of England, in 1689, was followed by a war between the English

*Relation, &c., en la Nouv: France, en annees 1665—6.

†The accounts of these expeditions through Lake Champlain do not clearly indicate the route followed by the French, but it was probably along the western border of the lake as far south as the outlet of Lake George, then up the outlet and through that lake to its head, from whence it crossed the country to the waters of the Hudson River. In the treaty between the French and Iroquois, referred to at the close of the preceding chapter, it was expressly provided that trade and commerce be opened to the Iroquois, with New France, "by the lake du saint Sacrement."

‡Dongan's Report to the Committee of Trade : 1687.

and French, which continued until the peace of Ryswick in 1697. The news of the quarrel between the mother countries soon reached America, and found the Colonists of both nations, not only willing, but anxious to participate in the struggle. The Chevalier de Callieres, who was Governor of Montreal and Commander-in-Chief of the troops and Militia in Canada, visited France in the year 1689, and submitted to the King a project for the reduction of the Province of New York, the re-establishment of French ascendency over the Five Nations, and the consequent control of the lucrative fur trade of America.

De Callieres' plan was to lead an army of two thousand men up the Richelieu River and Lake Champlain as far as the carrying place between Wood Creek and the Hudson River, where he would build a small log fort, and garrison it with two hundred men to guard the bateau during his absence. With the rest of his army he would march direct against Fort Orange (Albany) which he would seize, and then, embarking in the boats and canoes found there, would push on for New York. This town he represented as containing two hundred houses, and as protected by a small fort which could offer but a slight resistance to his attack. To prevent succor reaching the town from Boston or England, he required that two ships of war should be sent to cruise in the mouth of the river until his arrival. De Callieres predicted the highest benefits to France from the success of his project. "It will," he declared, "firmly establish the Christian religion as well among the Iroquois as among the other savages to whom we shall be able to speak as masters, when they are encircled on the side of Canada as well as of New York. It will secure and facilitate the cod-fishery, which is carried on along our coasts of Lacadie and on the Great Bank. It will give His Majesty one of the finest harbors in America which can be entered during almost all seasons of the year, in less than one month of very easy navigation." Accept the favorable opportunity which presents itself of becoming

masters of New York, adds de Callieres in conclusion, and the trade of our Colony will flourish; reject it and English intrigues with the Iroquois and other savages will destroy Canada in a little while.*

The French King received de Callieres with favor and in June of the same year sent instructions to Count de Frontenac, then viceroy of Canada, to organize an expedition to carry out the proposed plan, and directed that de Callieres should be appointed Governor of the conquered Province.—The King also ordered Sieur Begon to send out two ships of war under command of Sieur de la Caffiniere, who was instructed to place himself under the direction of de Frontenac. Should the proposed expedition fail, de Caffiniere was ordered "to make war against the English, and to range along the coasts of New England and New York, to capture as many prizes as possible, and to remain there until he have no more provisions than are necessary for his return to France."†

While the French were engaged in prosecuting the war with the Indians at the west they seem to have been regardless of the exposed state of the frontier towards Lake Champlain. The old forts of St. Anne and St. Theresa, which had proved so great a protection twenty years before, were suffered to decay. Montreal was not fortified; a triple palisade, in poor repair, being its main defence. Indeed the only work in that quarter of any strength was the fort at Chambly, which had been rebuilt of stone and was surrounded by a small but flourishing settlement. On the 12th of November 1687 a formidable party of the Iroquois suddenly attacked this fort. The garrison made a successful resistance, but the settlement around was ravaged and several of the inhabitants taken prisoners. A few days later the whole country between the St. Lawrence and the Richelieu swarmed with a savage host, who demanded immediate audience with the Governor,

*De Callieres to the Marquis of Seignelay. January, 1689.

†Instructions to Count de Frontenac, June 7th, 1689

M. de Denonville, and haughtily dictated peace to the weak and terrified inhabitants. "Look," cried the proud Chief, pointing towards a band of twelve hundred warriors at his back, "we are like the leaves of the forest in number and stronger than the mighty oak. Your people are few and weak. We have no occasion to lift our whole hand, for our little finger is sufficient to destroy you." Denonville bowed before a storm he could not resist, and concluded a treaty of peace upon the terms proposed by the savages.

Of short duration was this boon of peace to the French, the acceptance of which alike proclaimed their own humiliation and the power of their savage foe. On the 26th of July, 1688, twelve hundred Indian warriors landed on the island of Montreal, and having overpowered a force of one hundred and fifty Canadians and fifty Indians imprudently sent against them, devastated the whole settlement, killing nearly a thousand of the inhabitants and bearing two hundred of them into captivity.* The St. Lawrence frontier was now at the mercy of the fierce and relentless Iroquois. The power of the French was paralyzed; trade languished, agriculture was interrupted and the very existence of the colony threatened.

Such was the gloomy condition of affairs when the instructions of the King, for an invasion of New York, reached the Count de Frontenac. The troops in Canada consisted of thirty-five companies of regulars, each of which, when full numbered fifty men. But at least four hundred and fifty were required to fill the ranks, so that the actual number did not exceed thirteen hundred.† Of the *habitans*, about three thousand were able to bear arms.‡ Although de Frontenac could not send out an expedition of the magnitude and strength proposed in his instructions, he nevertheless deter-

*Gordon—Warburton, Vol. 1.

† De Callieres to the Marquis of Seignelay.

‡This was the estimated number in 1687. It had probably decreased during the two succeeding years—See Gov. Dongan's Report to Board of Trade.

mined to organize three small detachments to march against the English. One was to rendezvous at Montreal and was to proceed against Albany, another was to assemble at Three Rivers, from whence a descent was to be made upon the settlements near the Connecticut, and the third was to start from Quebec to attack the settlements, on the seaboard, east of Boston.

The party which left Three Rivers surprised and destroyed the English settlement of Salmon Falls and on their retreat, falling in with M. de Manerval, who had marched from Quebec, joined him in an attack on the fortified village of Kaskebe upon the sea coast, which they captured after a severe struggle.*

The third and most important detachment numbered two hundred and ten men, including ninety six Huron and Algonquin Indians. This detachment was placed under the command of two Canadian officers, Sieur la Moyne de St. Helene and Lieutenant Daillebout de Mantet, having under them d' Iberville and de Montesson. Attached to the expedition as volunteers were Sieurs de Bonrepos and de la Brosse, two Calvinist officers, and Sieurs de Blainville and de Montigny. The party left Montreal about the middle of the month of January 1690, crossing to the Richelieu and ascending that river and Lake Champlain on the ice. At the close of the sixth day's march a consultation was held to determine the route to be taken and to regulate the plan of attack. The Indians asked where the officers proposed to lead them. To this de St Helene replied that he had received no orders to march against any particular place, but generally to act as he should think best, and that he wished to attack and surprise Fort Orange, which he represented as the Capitol of New York and a place of considerable importance. The Indians, remembering the defeats of the French during the preceding year, and holding their prowess in slight esteem, opposed this plan as rash and impractica-

*Warburton, Vol. I.

ble. "Attack an armed fort indeed," cried a swarthy warrior ironically, "Since when have the French become so desperate!" "We wish to regain our honor, "replied de Mantet, "or perish in so glorious an enterprise." The Indians, however, remained unconvinced and the party moved on without coming to a decision.

Eight days after this the party reached the point where the two routes to Albany and Schenectady diverged. The Indians took the road leading towards Schenectady, and the French followed without objection. Nine days after they arrived, about four in the evening, within two miles of that place. Here the savages were addressed by one of their Chiefs, who urged them to lose all recollection of their fatigue and to prepare to take ample revenge for the injuries they had received from the Iroquois at the solicitation of the English. Having remained here to refresh themselves and prepare their arms, the party moved on, and about 11 o'clock came within sight of the village. The night was intensely cold and the citizens had retired early to bed—even those who usually guarded the gates of the palisade had withdrawn, leaving those avenues open and undefended. In profound silence the Canadian officers marched into the village and distributed their forces among the scattered houses. As soon as each man was properly posted, the savages raised the war cry and the whole force rushed upon the unconscious inhabitants. De Mantet, at the head of one party, assaulted a small fort which he captured and burned; putting to death all who defended it. De St. Helene rushed against the barricaded doors of the private houses, beating them down with muskets and slaughtering every one who opposed his progress. In the confusion, M. de Montigny was wounded by the thrust of a spear. The massacre lasted for two hours, and during that time sixty of the inhabitants, including women and children, were butchered in cold blood. Having pillaged and burned every house in the village but two, the French and Indians, early the next morning, started on their return

to Canada taking with them twenty-seven prisoners and carrying off fifty horses, besides a quantity of other property.*

The news of this murderous assault reached Albany about five o'clock the next morning, and created the greatest consternation among its inhabitants. Alarm guns were fired from the fort, messages were sent to Esopus for assistance, and Laurence, a Mohawk Chief then in Albany, hurried to the Mohawk Castles to bring down the warriors of that nation. In three days a party of fifty young men from Albany and one hundred and fifty Indians were collected at Schenectady, and started in pursuit of the retreating maranders. At Crown Point the young men gave out, but Laurence and his Indians continued on as far as Canada and succeeded in overtaking a party of Canadians, who had dropped to the rear of the main body, of whom they killed six and took twelve prisoners.

The accounts given by these prisoners were of the most startling nature. Count de Frontenac, they said, was busily engaged preparing for an invasion of New York. He had already built one hundred and twenty bateau and one hundred birch canoes and intended, in the spring, to pass up Lake Champlain at the head of fifteen hundred regular troops and one thousand allied Indians. Letters were now addressed, by Lieutenant Governor Liesler, to the Governors of the different Provinces, calling earnestly for aid to protect the exposed frontier beyond Albany. The Five Nations were also assembled in council and agreed to furnish eighteen hundred warriors to fight the French.

Nor were the authorities of Albany idle. On the 26th of March they ordered Captain Jacob d' Warm to proceed to Crown Point with seventeen English and twenty Indians, and there watch the movements of the enemy. Four days later Captain Abram Schuyler was sent, with nine men and

*M. de Monseignat's account. In this account it is stated that "some twenty Mohawks were spared, in order to show them that it was the English and not they against whom the grudge was entertained."

a party of Mohawks under Laurence, to take post at Otter Creek, for a similar purpose. Captain Schuyler, while posted at Otter Creek, led a scout of eight Indians as far as Chambly, where he encountered a small party of the French, of whom he killed two and took one prisoner.*

About the 10th of April, one of the parties on Lake Champlain sent in word that they had discovered the track of twelve French and Indians, proceeding in the direction of Albany. Warning of danger was immediately sent throughout the country and the inhabitants were advised to retreat into the neighboring towns for safety. Two families, residing near Schenectady, neglected the advice and were attacked during the night and eleven of their number killed or captured.†

The fear that this success might excite the French to further outrage hastened the preparations of the New York Colonists for the invasion of Canada. On the 1st of May an agreement was concluded between the provinces of Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York by which each was to furnish its quota of troops for the expedition.‡ At the urgent request of New England the command of the expedition was conferred upon John Winthrop.

A naval expedition was also fitted out by the Colonists and sent against Quebec, under command of Sir William Phipps.

The army under Major General Winthrop, numbering eight hundred men, left Albany about the 1st of August and proceeded on its march as far as Wood Creek. There Winthrop waited a few days for the promised reinforcement of Indians, but these not arriving, nor furnishing a supply of canoes to cross the lake, as they had promised to do, he called a council of war, who decided it inexpedient to proceed further. The expedition was therefore abandoned and

*Documentary History of New York.

†Id.

‡New York was to furnish four hundred men, Massachusetts, one hundred and sixty; Connecticut, one hundred and thirty-five, and Plymouth, sixty. Maryland promised one hundred men

the troops returned to Albany, where they were disbanded.

Attached to Winthrop's army was Captain John Schuyler of Albany, a man of great bravery and energy of character and of considerable experience in border warfare. Schuyler was dissatisfied with the decision of the council of war, which he considered weak and cowardly, and declared the campaign should not be abandoned so easily. Beating up for volunteers he soon gathered around him a little band of twenty nine followers, each as bold and daring as himself. To these he added one hundred and twenty Indians who had arrived at the camp under command of Juriaen, called the ferocious, and having loaded a number of canoes with provisions, proceeded, on the 13th of August, as far as Canaghsionie (probably Whitehall) where he encamped for the night. The next day he again embarked with his party and on the 21st of the month reached a point "one mile below the sand bank of Chambly."* In the course of the journey one of the Indians died. "He died of sickness," adds the brave Captain, evidently surprised that so quiet a death should be reserved for a Mohawk.

On the 22d the little party, having first secreted their canoes and provisions, started by land for Laprairie, which lay on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River about fifteen miles distant. While Schuyler was slowly approaching Laprairie, the inhabitants of that place were having a gala day in honor of their Governor, the brave old Frontenac, who having learned from his scouts that Winthrop's army had retired, was marching with eight hundred men to Quebec, to repel the threatened attack of Sir William Phipps in that quarter. Little did the quiet husbandmen imagine, as they sat near their doors at evening, chatting over the stirring incidents of the day, repeating to listening ears the

*Schuyler in his journal of this expedition gives the Indian names of several localities on Lake Champlain. On the 16th the party, he tells us, reached *Kanondoro*, and, travelling all night, arrived the next morning at *Oghraro*. The next night they travelled as far as *Ogharonde*, where "they determined, by the majorities, to fall upon Fort Laprairie."

wonders each had seen, and, perhaps, rejoicing at a security which the departure of the troops seemed to confirm, that a band of fierce and determined warriors lay secreted under the very trees which bordered the little settlement, ready with the morrow's sun to bring destruction and death about those rude but happy homes.

Early on the morning of the 23d Schuyler sent forward his spies, who soon returned with information that the inhabitants were leaving the fort to go into the fields to cut corn. It was Schuyler's intention to wait quietly until they reached the fields and then place his party between them and the fort, so as to intercept their retreat, but, through the eagerness of some young savages, the war cry was prematurely raised and both the English and Indians rushed to the attack without waiting for orders. The French, taking alarm, hastily retired to the fort, but not until six of their number were killed and nineteen taken prisoners. As soon as the prisoners were secured the assailants fell upon the cattle feeding around the fort and killed one hundred and fifty head of oxen and cows. They also set fire to all the houses and barns outside the fort, which were speedily consumed. The English wished to attack the fort itself, but did not do so, as the Indians refused to aid them. The forts at Montreal and Chambly now answering the alarm guns fired at Laprairie, Schuyler hastened his departure, lest his retreat might be cut off; but, before leaving, his Indians burned the body of one of their number, who had been killed during the affray.

The party retreated about seven miles, when they halted for dinner. The same evening they reached the river and embarked in their canoes. The next day they went as far as the ruins of old Fort St. Anne and, on the 15th, stopped on the long sand point near Port Kent, where they killed two Elk. The next day's journey took them to a place which Schuyler calls "The Little Stone Fort,"* from which a canoe

*This was probably a slight work thrown up by Capt. d' Warm at Crown Point the March previous, or one erected at Ticonderoga by Capt. Sanders Glen while he was waiting there for the advance of Winthrop's army.

was sent forward with the news. On the 27th the party reached the mouth of Wood Creek, and on the 31st arrived with their prisoners in safety at Albany.*

During the winter of 1690-91 the New York Colonists were too much occupied with their internal disputes to give much attention to military affairs. In the spring however their difficulties ceased, and active measures were at once adopted to carry on the war with Canada. The frontier posts of Albany, Schenectady and Half-Moon were repaired, the Militia reorganized and a conference held with the Five Nations, with whom the French emissaries had begun to tamper. The Indians not only promised to abandon all negotiations with the French, but pledged themselves to make war upon that people so long as they should live. An expedition was now planned against Canada; the Colonists wisely concluding that the only way to secure the co-operation of the savages was to give them active employment.

On the 22d day of June, 1691, Major Philip Schuyler left Albany at the head of one hundred and fifty English and three hundred Indians, and crossing Lake Champlain by the route taken by his brother Capt. John Schuyler, appeared, unexpectedly, before Fort Laprairie, which he carried by surprise, killing several of its defenders. De Callieres, then Governor of Montreal, hastily collected eight hundred troops and crossed the river, when the English retreated to the woods, where they met and destroyed a small detachment sent forward to cut off their retreat. A short time afterwards M. de Valrenes coming up with a large force, a severe and desperate battle was fought between the two parties. Schuyler posted his men behind trees, and, for an hour and a half, withstood the fire and repelled the charges of the Canadian troops. In this engagement the loss of the English was trifling, while not less than two hundred of the French were killed or wounded. Schuyler, fearing to be overpow-

*Journal of Capt. John Schuyler.

ered by superior numbers, now hastily withdrew and returned to Albany.

The favorable result of this expedition gave a new impetus to the warlike temper of the Iroquois and strengthened their friendship for the English. These Indians, for the next two years, so harassed the French that de Frontenac determined again to invade their territory. For this purpose he collected a force of six or seven hundred French and Indians and, about the middle of January, 1693, set out from Montreal, for the Mohawk valley. The march, upon the frozen surface of the lake and through the deep snows of the forest, was attended with great hardships, yet such was the energy of the invaders that early in February they passed Schenectady unobserved, and falling suddenly upon the first Mohawk village, killed many of the inhabitants and took over three hundred prisoners. As soon as the intelligence of this incursion reached Albany, Major Schuyler collected a party of about three hundred men, principally Indians, and started in pursuit of the assailants, who, according to their custom, had retreated immediately after the attack. Schuyler continued the pursuit as far as the Hudson, and would have overtaken the enemy had not a severe storm of snow and wind prevented his crossing the river. As it was he succeeded in recapturing about fifty of the prisoners, with whom he returned to Albany. The sufferings of those engaged in this expedition were so great that the Indians fed upon the dead bodies of the enemy, and the French were compelled to eat their own shoes.*

Although the contest between the French and English continued several years longer, this was the last expedition of any importance which entered the valley of Lake Champlain during this war. The peace of Ryswick, in 1697, was soon followed by a formal treaty between the French and the Five Nations.

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*Gordon.

CHAPTER III.

Indian Depredations on the Frontier—Forts built by the New York Colonists on Wood Creek—Two Expeditions organized against Canada—Condition of the Country about Lake Champlain—The French build a Fort at Crown Point—French Grants on the Lake—Troubles among the New York Colonists—Attempt to settle the Lands lying between the Hudson River and Lake Champlain.

The history of events connected with Lake Champlain brings us down to the year 1709. During "Queen Anne's War," which commenced in 1702, the frontier towns of New England were severely scourged by marauding parties from Canada. Deerfield was destroyed in 1704 by a party of three hundred French and Indians under command of the inhuman de Rouville.* In 1708, a party of four hundred men, including savages, crossed the almost impracticable mountains of Vermont and New Hampshire, and attacked the little fort and village of Haverhill which, after a sharp defence, they carried and reduced to ashes.

These and other repeated and unprovoked aggressions at length aroused the British Ministry who, in 1709, at the earnest solicitation of the Colonists, adopted a plan for the conquest of the French possessions in America. This plan contemplated an attack by water upon Quebec, whilst fifteen hundred men, from New York and the New England Provinces, were to attempt Montreal by the way of Lake Champlain. The inhabitants of New York entered warmly into the scheme. They not only furnished their quota of troops, but several volunteer companies were organized to join the expedition. The Five Nations, through the exertions of Col. Peter Schuyler, were induced to take up the hatchet and to

*This expedition followed the route up Lake Champlain to the Winooski and then ascended that river and crossed the mountains to the Connecticut. On their return they secreted the "bell of St. Regis" in the sands of Burlington, where it remained until the following spring, when it was taken to Canada.

send five hundred warriors into the field. New York also, at her own expense, opened a road from Albany to Lake Champlain, which greatly facilitated the movements of the troops and the transportation of supplies.

This road commenced near the present village of Schuylerville and run up the east side of the river to Fort Edward, and thence by the way of Wood Creek to the head of Lake Champlain. It ran the whole way through a dense forest. Along the route three forts were erected; one on Wood Creek near the present village of Fort Ann; another at the commencement of the carrying place between the Hudson River and and the head of Wood Creek, which was at first called Fort Nicholson; and a third on the summit of one of the hills opposite Schuylerville. These forts were built of timber and were surrounded by palisades so constructed as to protect the garrisons from the fire of musketry. One hundred bateau and a large number of canoes were built at the mouth of Wood Creek for the transportation of the troops across Lake Champlain. All the arrangements for the campaign being complete, the army left Albany under the command of Col. Nicholson and encamped at Fort Ann, where they awaited intelligence of the arrival of the expedition destined for the attack of Quebec.

These demonstrations on the part of the English Colonists created great alarm among the inhabitants of Canada, who were but ill prepared to resist the large force which threatened both extremes of the Colony. A council of war was called by M. de Vaudreuil, under whose advice a force of fifteen hundred men was sent to Lake Champlain to oppose the advance of Nicholson's army; but a misunderstanding between the Governor General and some of his principal officers embarrassed the enterprise and ultimately caused the army to return.

The two expeditions against Canada proved equally abortive. The fleet destined for the attack of Quebec was sent to Lisbon instead, to support the Portuguese against

the power of Castile, while Nicholson's army, discouraged by delays and almost decimated by a malignant and fatal malady which broke out in the camp,* returned to Albany, where they were soon afterwards disbanded.

In 1711 preparations were again made by the Colonists for the invasion of Canada. Colonel Nicholson, under whom served Colonels Schuyler, Whitney and Ingoldsby, mustered at Albany a strong force comprising two thousand English, one thousand Germans and one thousand Indians, who, on the 28th of August, commenced their march towards Lake Champlain, taking the Lake George route, instead of the unhealthy one by the way of Wood Creek, which had proved so fatal to the troops on the former expedition. At the same time an army of six thousand four hundred men, under Brigadier General Hill, sailed from Boston on board of sixty-eight transports, under convoy of Sir Hovedon Walker, for a simultaneous attack on Quebec.†

As soon as M. de Vaudreuil received intelligence of these movements he hastened to Quebec, and, having strengthened its defences, confided to M. de Boucourt the responsible duty of resisting the debarkation of the English troops, while he returned to the rescue of Montreal. But the plans of the invading army were destined to be again defeated. The British Admiral had neglected the warnings of an experienced French navigator, named Paradis, who accompanied him, and approached too near a small island in the narrow and dangerous channel of the Traverse. While embarrassed amid its rocks, a sudden squall scattered the fleet, driving eight of the vessels on the shore, where they were wrecked.‡ Charlevoix says nearly three thousand men were drowned, whose bodies were afterwards found scattered along the

*This sickness is said to have been caused by the Indians who poisoned the waters of the Creek. But Doctor Fitch in his "Survey of Washington County" questions the truth of this accusation, and presumes the malady to have been a malignant dysentery, brought on by the troops drinking the stagnant water which flowed into the creek from the surrounding marshes.

†Gordon. ‡Warburton, Vol. I.

banks of the river. After this severe disaster the Admiral bore away for Cape Breton, and the expedition was abandoned. The advance corps of Nicholson's army had scarcely reached the head of Lake George, when intelligence arrived of the failure of the northern expedition. Orders were at once given for their return to Albany.

These two abortive attempts upon Canada cost the Province of New York, alone, over thirty thousand pounds sterling. Their failure disheartened the Colonists and chilled for a time the affections of the Five Nations, who began to look upon the English as a weak and cowardly people. The situation of the New York Colonists was now most critical. Clouds of adversity lowered darkly over the Province. The river Indians became restless and evinced a strong and growing disposition to break their allegiance; the Five Nations listened favorably to the renewed propositions of peace from the French, who threatened an invasion of the Province by sea and land. Happily these impending evils were averted by the treaty of Utrecht, which was concluded in the spring of 1713. By this treaty the French King released his nominal sovereignty over the Iroquois and recognized their country as subject to the dominion of Great Britain.

As yet no settlements had been permanently established in the valley of Lake Champlain. Fort St. Anne, built in 1665, had been occupied for a few years and then abandoned. The "little Stone Fort" mentioned by Schuyler in 1690, was a structure of no importance except as it served for the immediate protection of those by whom it was erected. Fort Ann, erected by Colonel Nicholson on Wood Creek in 1709, was burned by him on the return of his army to Albany in 1711. Kalm saw the remains of the burnt palisades, when he passed there thirty-eight years afterwards. In 1713 Fort Saratoga was the nearest post to the lake on the south, and Forts Laprairie and Chambly on the north. No settlements were commenced within the present limits of

Vermont until after the erection of Fort Dummer, on the Connecticut river, in 1724.

We have already seen that, from the first settlement of the country, Lake Champlain had been used as a thoroughfare through which predatory excursions were directed against both the French and English frontiers. Its control was therefore a matter of great importance. No movement was however made to obtain the command of this important avenue until the year 1731, when the Marquis de Beauharnois, then Governor General of Canada, erected a fort at Crown Point, which he called St. Frederic, in honor of Frederic Maurepas the, then, French Secretary of State. The English claimed the title to the territory on both sides of the lake, by virtue of their treaties with the Five Nations, and strongly remonstrated against, but took no steps to prevent its unauthorized occupation by the French.

"Fort St. Frederic," says a celebrated traveler, "is built on a rock consisting of black lime slates* and is nearly quadrangular, has high and thick walls, made of the same limestone, of which there is a quarry about half a mile from the fort. On the eastern part of the fort is a high tower, which is proof against bomb shells, provided with very thick and substantial walls, and well stored with cannon from the bottom almost to the very top, and the Governor lives in the Tower. In the terre plaine of the fort is a well built little church and houses of stone for the officers and soldiers. There are sharp rocks on all sides towards the land beyond cannon shot from the fort, but among them are some which are as high as the walls of the fort and very near them. Within one or two musket shots to the east of the fort is a windmill, built of stone, with very thick walls and most of the flour, which is wanted to supply the fort, is ground here. This windmill is so constructed as to serve the purpose of a redoubt and at the top of it are five or six small pieces of

*Chazy Limestone—Emmons.

cannon."* Subsequently a trench or wide ditch was dug around the fort, on the land side, enclosing the hill referred to, above, by Kalm. This trench commenced at the water's edge about two rods north and terminated about fifteen rods south of the fort. Its greatest distance from the fort, in the rear, was thirty rods. An enclosure was also erected about twenty-five rods north-west of the fort which reached the water's edge and surrounded several buildings used for soldier's quarters.†

Soon after the erection of the fort a settlement of considerable size was formed about it, on both sides of the lake, composed, principally, of the families of old soldiers who had been paid off and discharged from service. The houses of some of the settlers were convenient and comfortable, but the majority lived in mere cabins built of boards. To each soldier in service was allotted a small piece of ground near the walls of the fort, which was cultivated as a garden, and occasionally occupied as a summer residence.*

A small village stood about half a mile south-west of the fort, and one half mile further south was a hamlet, containing four houses, surrounded by wheat fields.†

The boats used by the inhabitants were of three kinds; bark canoes, dugouts or canoes made of a log of wood hollowed out, and bateau. The last mentioned were constructed with flat bottoms of oak and sides of pine, and were used for the transportation of troops or supplies upon the lake. When Kalm visited the fort, in 1749, a yacht or large sail vessel made regular trips between that place and St. Johns in Canada.‡

Until 1759 St. Frederic was the seat of French power on the Lake. Here was a rallying point for the fierce Abenaquis from the St. Francis, the Arundacks of the fertile Ottawa and the warlike Wyandots of the west—drawn together by a common love of revenge or the hope of plunder. Here

*Kalm's Travels in 1749. †Journal of the New Hampshire Scout

‡Kalm says this was the first sail vessel built on the lake.

the ferocious Outagamis, the restless Algonquin and the vindictive Huron met to startle humanity at the recital of their deeds of horrid barbarity. It was a strange and varied scene often presented at this frontier post. Now would be heard the vesper bell of the little chapel calling the rude but virtuous husbandman, the scarred veteran of France and the voluble Canadian to their evening prayers, while a moment later, the rocky shore would echo to the loud whoop of the merciless savage, returning from some successful forray upon the neighboring settlements. Long had the English Colonists cause to regret the want of vigilance and forecast on the part of their rulers, which permitted the French to seize and retain this controlling position on the lake.

Considerable interest has lately been expressed in relation to the probable extent of the French settlements at Crown Point. The whole peninsula, between the lake and Bulwagga Bay, bears the clearest evidences that a well arranged village once stood there. Fragments of former walls, the ruins of enclosures and cellars and the remains of old and plainly marked streets are still to be seen. The village, on the west, faced the bay, which was used as a harbor for the protection of boats and vessels. Near the ruins of the fort are to be found asparagus and other hardy plants, growing wild, which yet probably mark the location of the little gardens of the soldiers, referred to by Kalm. The remains of two burial places are also to be seen—one used probably by the French, and the other marking the last resting place of the soldiers who died at Crown Point, on the return of the "Army of Canada" in 1776.

We have no data by which to ascertain the exact population of the French settlements around St. Frederic: but it probably at no time exceeded six or eight hundred, exclusive of the garrison at the fort. The period of the existence of these settlements was confined to the twenty-eight years of French ascendency on the lake. Prior to 1731, the borders of the lake, in every direction, were wild and uncultivated;

no building stood upon its shores, not an acre of its majestic forests had been cleared, nor had its fertile soil been touched by the hand of the husbandman. The remains of these early times are now interesting, not so much for their antiquity—for even the progressive American cannot whittle antiquity out of a single century—as for the evidence they present how soon the former history of the country is lost, and the character, habits and occupation of its first inhabitants are forgotten.

The Governor of Canada did not confine the encroachments on Lake Champlain to the vicinity of Crown Point, for, soon after the erection of Fort St. Frederic, he issued grants, for large tracts of land lying on both sides of the lake, to several persons holding office under the French King. The first of these grants was made to Sieur Peau, Major of the town and castle of Quebec, on the 10th day of April, 1733, and embraced a tract "two leagues or two and a half in front, by three in depth along the river Chambly and Lake Champlain, together with the river Chazy included therein and Isle a la Motte."* Two days afterwards another grant was issued to Sieur St. Vincent, ensign of Foot, for "two leagues in front by three leagues in depth on lake Champlain,†" and another, on the 20th of the same month, to Sieur la Gauchetiere, Captain of Marines, of "two leagues front by three leagues deep on said lake."‡

On the 7th of July, 1734, a grant was issued to Sieur Contrecour Jr., Ensign of Infantry, for a tract of land which was described as "beginning at the mouth of the *Riviere Aux Loutres* (Otter Creek, Vt.) one league and a half above and one league and a half below, making two leagues in front by three in depth, together with so much of said river as is found included therein with three islets which are in front of said concession and depend thereon." On the 20th of the same month, another grant was made to Sieur de Beauvis

*Now, northern part of the town of Champlain, N. Y.

†Remainder of Champlain.

‡In town of Chazy, N. Y.

of lands "two leagues in front and three in depth on Lake Champlain together with the peninsula which is found to be in front of said land."* In the same month another was issued to Sieur de la Periere, "beginning at the mouth of the river Onynouski (Winooski) one league above and one league below, making two leagues front by three leagues in depth, with the extent of said river which will be found comprehended therein, together with the islands and *battures* adjacent." Also one, to Sieur Douville, on the 8th of October, 1736, for lands on the east side of the lake, "two leagues front by three leagues deep;"† and another on the 13th of June, 1737, to Sieur Robart, King's Store-keeper at Montreal, "three leagues front by two leagues in depth on the west side of Lake Champlain, taking in going down one league below the river Bouquet and, in going up, two and a half above said river." The island of North Hero or *Isle Longue* was granted to Contrecour, Captain of Infantry, and M. Raimbault received a large concession north and adjoining the lands granted to M. de la Periere.

These grants were issued subject to forfeiture in case the lands were not settled and improved within a certain time. This condition not having been fulfilled, all but the two last mentioned were re-united to the King's domains by an ordinance of the Governor and Intendant of Canada of the 10th of May, 1741. The grantees gave various reasons why their lands had not been settled within the time. Peau could find no farmers to place upon his seigniory, St. Vincent had been absent on the King's service and Contrecour had offered very advantageous inducements to settlers, including a bonus of three hundred livres, but without success. La Fontaine promised to go on to his grant immediately with three men, to build there, and was willing to furnish grain and money to any who should commence a settlement. Sieur Robart had surveyed his lands and had neglected no

* Now parts of Swanton and Highgate, Vt.

† In town of Georgia, Vt.

inducements for young men to settle upon them. These excuses were not satisfactory to the Government Officers. They, however, declared that patents would be re-issued to any who should place settlers on the land within one year from that time. This was not done; but soon after settlements were formed near the mouth of the Big Chazy river and at Windmill Point,* which were occupied for a short time and then abandoned.

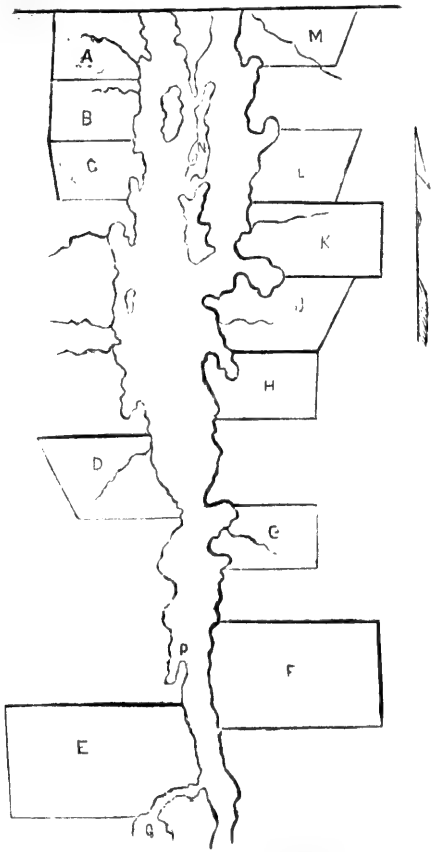
The lands originally granted to Peau were, in 1752, conceded to Sieur Bedon, Councilor in the Superior Council of Quebec, and by him afterwards transferred to M. de Beaujeu, who owned a seigniory adjoining on the north. In April, 1743 and 1745, two patents of concession were issued to Sieur Hocquart, Councilor of State and Intendant of the naval forces at Brest, for a large tract embraced in the present towns of Panton, Addison and Bridport, Vt., which Hocquart conveyed to Michael Chartier de Lotbiniere in 1764, and in November 1758, the Marquis de Vaudreuil, Governor General of Canada, granted to the same de Lotbiniere the seigniory of Alainville embracing over four leagues front by five leagues depth and lying partly on Lake George and partly on Lake Champlain.

The aggregate of these concessions embraced over eight hundred square miles of territory. No permanent settlements were however made under any of the grants, except on parts of the seigniories of Hocquart and Alainville, in the immediate vicinity of Crown Point and Ticonderoga. After the conquest of Canada the grantees petitioned for a confirmation of their titles, but this the British Government refused, at the same time, however, declaring that the claim-

*The first houses I saw after leaving Fort St. Frederic were some on the western side of the lake, about ten French miles from St. Johns, in which the French lived before the last war and which they then abandoned. * * * A Windmill, built of stone, stands on the east side of the lake, on a projecting piece of ground. Some Frenchmen lived near to it. From this mill to Fort St. Johns they reckon eight French miles. The English, with their Indians, have burned the houses here several times, but the mill remained unhurt.—*Kalm in* 1749.

ants should be entitled to so much of the concessions as should be proportionate to the improvements made on them,

MAP OF FRENCH GRANTS ON LAKE CHAMPLAIN.



REFERENCES.—A, Sieur Pean.—B, Sieur St. Vincent, Jr.—C, M. de la Gauchetiere.—D, M. Robart.—G, M. Contrecour, Jr.—H, La Manaudiere.—J, M. de la Periere.—K, M. Raimboult.—L, M. Douville.—M, M. de Beauvois, Jr.—N, M. Contrecour.—E, Alainville.—F, Hocquart.—P, Crown Point.—Q, Lower End of Lake George.

NOTE.—The Engraver has omitted to mark the south side of Missisco Bay, which forms the north bounds of de Beauvois Grant, marked "M."

at the rate of fifty acres for every three acres improved, provided they took out new grants for the same under the seal of the Province of New York, subject to the usual quit-rents. No new grant to one person was to exceed twenty thousand acres, nor did this privilege extend to the grants of la Gauchetiere and others annulled by the ordinance of the 10th of May, 1741.

The claimants refused the smaller grants from the Province of New York, and declined to pay the required quit-rents. They fell back upon the original title of the French King who, they contended, first discovered the country and had held undisturbed possession of it to the year 1758. To this the authorities of New York replied, that the country south of the St. Lawrence River belonged originally to the Five Nations, from whom it passed to the English by virtue of a treaty made as early as 1683. That the treaty of Utrecht recognized the sovereignty of Great Britain over these nations, and that the possession of the French at Crown Point was an encroachment on British soil, which could confer no title to the French King. They also referred to an ancient grant (1696) to Godfrey Dellius of a large tract along the head of the lake, extending upwards of twenty miles to the north of Crown Point, as proof that the English had claimed the lake to be within their jurisdiction. But the strongest position taken against these claims and which, considering the weakness of the French title, induced the British Government to disaffirm them, was the fact that a large portion of the lands covered by the French grants were then held by old officers and soldiers of the provincial army, under patents issued under the seal of the Province of New York.*

New York was the central point of English influence in America. It held the keys of Canada and of the great western lakes. Within its limits burned the Council Fire of the Six Nations,† the most powerful confederacy ever

*For interesting documents relating to the French Grants on Lake Champlain see Documentary History of New York, Vol. I.

†The Tuscaroras joined the Confederacy in 1712.

formed among the Indians; whose sway extended west to the Mississippi, and beyond the Ohio on the south. But though strong in position, New York was weak in power. Its history, from the death of Governor Montgomery in 1731, to the close of Mr. Clinton's administration in 1753, is one of almost continued distrust and contention between the Executive and the Assembly. In this war of party the public business of the Province was neglected and the security of the inhabitants disregarded. Occasionally, however, the Government would awake from its lethargy and, for a moment, return to the performance of its legitimate duties. During one of these periods of quiet, a plan was projected for the settlement of the wilderness between Lake Champlain and the Hudson River, to serve as a check upon the French positions on Lake Champlain. The Governor issued a proclamation, describing in glowing language, the beauty and fertility of the country, and offering the most liberal terms to those who might settle there.

Seduced by this proclamation, Captain Laughlin Campbell came from Scotland, in 1737, to examine the land, and was so well satisfied with its appearance that he returned to Isla, sold his estate and brought over, at his own expense, eighty-three protestant families, consisting of four hundred and twenty-three adults and many children. The Governor of New York had promised Campbell a grant of 30,000 acres, free of all charge, except those of survey and the usual quit-rents. But, on his arrival, the mercenary officers of Government refused to fulfill this engagement, unless they were allowed a share in the grant. This Campbell refused to give them. A dispute arising between him and the Government on this account, in which the Assembly joined with the emigrants, the negotiations were broken off. The emigrants were saved from starvation by enlisting in an expedition to Carthagena, while Campbell, broken down in spirits and fortune, sought a home elsewhere.

The Colonists long had cause to regret the folly of

the Government in not securing, at this time, the settlement of their northern frontier. The protestant Highlanders, brought over by Campbell, were a race of hardy and industrious people, inured by nature and habit with great power of endurance. They would have formed a bulwark against the French, who, for twenty years afterwards, retained absolute control of the lake and sent out, from their stronghold at Crown Point, bands of marauders to plunder and devast the frontier settlements.

CHAPTER IV.

Sir William Johnson's Expedition against Crown Point—Battle of Lake George—The French fortify Ticonderoga—Montcalm attacks the English at Lake George—Massacre at Fort William Henry—Defeat of Abercrombie at Ticonderoga—English Scouting Parties—Putnam in trouble.

Notwithstanding the repeated depredations of the French upon the northern and western frontier, no attempt was made to weaken their power until 1755. On the 14th of April of that year, the Governors of the different Provinces met in conference in Virginia, and determined upon the plan of a campaign, by which to repel the encroachments of the French from the Ohio to the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. This campaign contemplated three separate expeditions; one under Sir William Johnson against Crown Point,* another under Governor Shirley, of Massachusetts, against Niagara, while Major General Braddock, the Commander-in-Chief, with a third, was to move upon the French Fort on the Ohio.

The expedition against Crown Point was to be composed of provincial troops and Indians. But the six Nations did not enter into the scheme with their usual spirit and alacrity. They were dissatisfied at the long continued inaction of the English, which contrasted unfavorably with the activity and vigilance of the French. Nor had the Indians been backward to express their disapprobation. "You are desirous that we should open our minds and our hearts to you," said the celebrated Mohawk Sachem Hendrick, at one of their

*Sir William Johnson's Commission bears date the 16th of April, 1755, and recites that the troops are placed under his command "to be employed in an attempt to erect a strong Fortress upon an eminence near the French Fort at Crown Point, and for removing the encroachments of the French on His Majesty's land there."

Councils. "Look at the French: they are men, they are fortifying everywhere; but we are ashamed to say it, you are like women. You are bare and open without fortifications."†

This difference in the two countries was caused by the heterogeneal character and genius of the inhabitants. The English Colonists were bold, intelligent and self-dependent. They understood and cherished the principles of self-government. Jealous of freedom, they watched their rulers with eagle eyes, refused to vote supplies unless they knew the money would be appropriated for the public good, and opposed the erection of forts on the frontier, lest their guns might be used to overawe the people. On the other hand, France kept her Colonies in a state of dependence upon the Mother Country. The Canadians were allowed neither freedom of thought nor action. By this means the latter became, as subjects, more faithful but less independent than their neighbors. France directed forts to be built in the wilderness, and her orders were obeyed. England also required forts, but, instead of building them, the Colonists questioned their necessity, objected to the expense and neglected to provide means for their erection.

The words of the Mohawk Sachem were true. When the Governors met at Alexandria, England had no works of defense upon her frontier, while the French were fortified at du Quesne, Niagara, Crown Point and Beau-Sejour. But notwithstanding their avowed reluctance, the Six Nations at length renewed their covenant of friendship, and promised to support the Colonies in the approaching struggle.

A considerable amount of land carriage had, in former times, to be encountered in passing from the Hudson River to Lake Champlain. The portage commenced at the Hudson, near the present village of Fort Edward, from whence two routes diverged; one leading by the way of Fort Ann to the mouth of Wood Creek, a distance of twenty-four miles; the other passing by the way of Glen's Falls to the head of

*Documentary History of New York, Vol. 2.

Lake George, a distance of fourteen miles. From the first route a third diverged near Fort Ann, which led to the waters of Lake Champlain at the head of South Bay. By the aid of boats on Wood Creek the portage on the first route was usually reduced to from six to ten miles. This portage was called "The Great Carrying Place," and was selected as the point of rendezvous for General Johnson's Army, from whence it was to move to Lake Champlain.

Early in July Major General Phinehas Lyman arrived at the portage with about six hundred New England troops and commenced the erection of a fort, which was afterwards called Fort Edward, in honor of Edward, Duke of York, the grand-son of the English Sovereign. Johnson reached the Camp on the 14th day of August, and found the army increased to two thousand eight hundred and fifty men, fit for duty. New recruits continued to arrive so that the General found himself, by the end of August, at the head of thirty-one hundred Provincials and two hundred and fifty Indians,* By the 3d of September the main army had reached the head of Lake George, while a great number of teamsters were engaged in dragging six hundred boats over the portage, to be used for the transportation of troops across that lake. Here Johnson halted for the boats to come up, and to announce the plan of his future operations. "I propose," said he, "to go down this lake with a part of the army, and take post at the end of it, at a pass called Tionderogue, there wait the coming up of the rest of the army and then attack Crown Point."† While the English commander was thus planning his advance upon Fort St. Frederic, the French General had left that post and was hastening towards South Bay.

When General Lyman stopped on the banks of the Hudson to await the arrival of the main army, the whole available French force on Lake Champlain did not exceed

*Johnson to Lt. Gov. De Lancey.

†Johnson to the Board of Trade

eight hundred men, exclusive of Indians. Early in the summer, however, the Baron Dieskau, a brave old officer, who had distinguished himself under the celebrated Marshal Saxe, arrived at Quebec, accompanied by several veteran regiments from France. These troops were immediately ordered to lake Ontario, but Dieskau, hearing that the English were in motion towards Lake George, changed his route and passed rapidly forward towards Crown Point, where he arrived about the 1st of August. For the defence of this fortress seven hundred regulars, sixteen hundred Canadians and seven hundred Savages were now assembled.*

Dieskau left a strong garrison at Fort St. Frederic, encamped a portion of his army at Ticonderoga, and with six hundred savages, as many Canadians and two hundred regular troops, ascended the lake to the head of South Bay, and after four days march, arrived within four miles of Fort Edward, on the Lake George road. The Indians now refused to proceed further in the direction of the fort, but were willing to go against the open camp of the English at Lake George. The head of the column was therefore turned towards the lake.

As soon as the English Commander learned that the French had left South Bay, he determined, with the advice of a Council of War, to send a strong party to reinforce Fort Edward, then guarded by two hundred and fifty New Hampshire troops and five companies of the New York regiment.† This reinforcement consisted of one thousand Provincial troops, under command of Colonel Ephraim Williams of Massachusetts, the founder of Williams' College, and two hundred Indian warriors led by Hendrick, the Mohawk Sachem. They started from the camp about nine o'clock on the morning of the 8th of September, expecting to find the French at or near Fort Edward. When Dieskau learned, from his scouts, the approach of Williams'

*Bancroft's History of U. S. Vol. 4.

†Johnson to the Governors of the several Colonies.

party, he extended his line on both sides of the road in the form of a half moon, and in this order continued slowly and cautiously to advance. Colonel Williams, in the mean time, pushed forward with rash confidence, and had proceeded about four miles from the lake, when he suddenly found himself in the very centre of the half circle. At that moment the French opened a fire of musketry in front and on both flanks. Thus attacked on all sides by an unseen enemy the Provincials offered but a slight resistance. For a short time the slaughter of the English was dreadful. Williams fell dead at the head of his regiment, and the brave and faithful Hendrick was mortally wounded; but the troops were withdrawn with great skill and coolness by Lieutenant Col. Whitney, who succeeded to the command on the death of Williams.

Johnson lay at Lake George without intrenchment or defense of any kind. Aroused by the noise of the firing, he sent Lieutenant Colonel Cole with a reinforcement of two hundred men to the aid of Williams, and hastened to form a sort of breastwork with fallen trees, drawing up a few pieces of cannon which had been left five hundred yards distant from the front.* At ten oclock the defeated troops began to arrive at the camp in large bodies, and, at half-past eleven, the French appeared in sight, marching in regular order against the centre of the breastwork.

It had been Dieskau's purpose to rush forward and to enter the camp with the fugitives; but the Iroquois (Caughnawagas) took possession of a rising ground and stood inactive. At this the Abenakis halted also; and the Canadians became intimidated.† A few shots from the artillery drove them all to the shelter of the neighboring swamps, and left the French Commander and his handful of veteran troops unsupported. As the regulars advanced against the centre they suddenly halted about one hundred and fifty yards from the breastwork, and then again advanced, firing by

*Review of Military operations in North America.
†Bancroft's History of the U. S., Vol. 4.

platoons. Finding it impossible to break the centre, Dieskau moved to the right and attacked Williams, Ruggles and Titcomb's regiments, where a warm fire was kept up for nearly an hour.

About four o'clock in the afternoon the English suddenly leaped over the slight breastwork and charged upon the assailants, who precipitately retreated, leaving almost all the regular troops dead on the field. The Canadians and Indians retired, in small parties, to the scene of Williams' defeat in the morning, where they were surprised and defeated by a party of one hundred and twenty New Hampshire and ninety New York troops, who, under command of Captain McGinnes, had been sent from Fort Edward to reinforce the army at Lake George. The loss of the English this day was about two hundred and sixteen killed and ninety-six wounded; of the French the loss was much greater.* Dieskau was found, after the retreat, leaning against the stump of a tree, thrice wounded and helpless. Early in the action General Johnson received a painful wound in the thigh and retired to his tent; the command then devolved on General Lyman, who actually fought the battle and was entitled to all the glory of the day. Yet Johnson, by this victory, became a Baronet, and received a gratuity of five thousand pounds, while Lyman is not mentioned in the Official Bulletin.

A rapid movement upon Crown Point would have forced the French to evacuate that post; but Johnson knew not how to profit by success. Instead of following up his victory by a quick and well directed blow, he wasted the rest of the season in building Fort William Henry; a useless pile of wooden barracks, surrounded by an embankment and ditch, which stood on an elevated spot about three hundred yards from the temporary breastwork attacked by Dieskau.

While the army remained at the head of Lake George, in

*Johnson in his official report of this battle estimates the loss of the French at from five to six hundred. Warburton states it as a "little short of eight hundred."

timid inaction, Captain Robert Rodgers and Captain Israel Putnam, two daring and active officers belonging to the New England troops, made repeated demonstrations against the French, cut off many of their working parties and obtained correct information of all their proceedings. Upon one of these occasions Rodgers and his men spent the night in the trench under Fort St Frederic, and at another time, surprised a Frenchman within gun-shot of its walls.*

The season of 1756 passed without any military movement of importance being made, by either party, in the vicinity of Lake Champlain. The English completed the defences of Fort William Henry, and, at one time, contemplated building a fort at the head of South Bay; but this last work was at first delayed and ultimately abandoned. On the other side the French were busily engaged in fortifying the peninsula of Ticonderoga. After the defeat of Dieskau the remnant of his army sought shelter there, where they established a camp and commenced building a fort, afterwards called Fort Carillon. During the season of 1756 over two thousand French were constantly engaged upon the work. The lake now presented a most lively appearance. Canoes, bateau, and schooners were constantly passing and repassing between Canada, Crown Point and Ticonderoga, transporting troops from point to point, or loaded with supplies and ammunition.

Small scouting parties would occasionally leave Fort William Henry and penetrate as far as the French works, to gather information and beat up the outposts. Upon one occasion Capt. Robert Rodgers was sent on a scout with a party of fifty men and five whale boats. Rodgers drew his boats over the mountain into Lake Champlain and, passing Ticonderoga in the night, on the morning of the 7th of July, secreted his party on the east side the lake, about twenty-five miles north of Crown Point. While lying here, Rodgers counted thirty boats passing towards Canada, and, about

*Journal of the New Hampshire Scouts.

three o'clock in the morning, discovered a schooner of thirty-five or forty tons at anchor a short distance below. As he was preparing to attack this vessel, two lighters with twelve men on board approached the shore, into which his party fired, killing three of the Frenchmen and wounding two others. The lighters were taken and found loaded with wheat, flour, rice, brandy and wine. Destroying all but the two last, Rodgers hastened back, his men rowing none the less stoutly, when the prisoners informed them that a party of five hundred men were only two leagues below, on their way to Crown Point.*

The campaign of 1757 opened early and briskly on the northern frontier. While the strong ice yet covered the surface of the lake and the snow lay in heavy drifts along its shores, eleven hundred French and four hundred Canada Indians, under Vaudreuil and the Chevalier Longueuil, marched from Ticonderoga to surprise the garrison of Fort William Henry. During the night of the 16th of March the party lay upon the snow behind Long Point, and, early the next morning, appeared suddenly before the fort, expecting to carry it by surprise; but Stark—the same who, twenty years later, was ready to make his Molly a widow for the cause of liberty—was there with his rangers, and the assailants were forced back, not however until they had burned several sloops, a large number of bateau, and some store houses which stood beyond reach of the guns of the fort.

Soon after the return of the French, Colonel Parker was sent from Fort William Henry, with a command of four hundred men, to attempt the works at Ticonderoga. The detachment crossed the lake in whale boats and bateau, but, before reaching Ticonderoga, were decoyed in an ambuscade, and the whole party, with the exception of two officers and seventy men, either killed or taken prisoners.

The French still urged forward the defences of Fort Car-

*Rodgers' Journal in 4th Vol. Documentary History of N. Y.

illon. Montcalm, brave, sagacious and active, was at Montreal preparing to carry out his favorite project of reducing Fort William Henry. Everything favored the enterprise. The Indians, including many stern warriors of the Six Nations, gathered in clouds around the little fort of St. Johns on the Richelieu, and there danced their war dances beneath the white banner of France. Six days afterwards they landed, from two hundred canoes, upon the rock-bound shores of Ticonderoga, where they were met by Marin, returning from a foray near Fort Edward; his canoes decorated with the bleeding scalps of forty-two Englishmen. Six thousand French and Canadians, and seventeen hundred Indians were now collected at Ticonderoga, armed to the teeth, and anxious to be led against the enemy. Montcalm needed no persuasion. On the last day of July M. de Levy was sent forward by land, under guidance of the Indians, with twenty-five hundred men, and Montcalm followed the next day, with the main body of the army, in two hundred and fifty boats.

Gen. Webb, a man of weak, irresolute and timid character, was in command of the Provincial troops, and had five thousand men with him at Fort Edward, while a body of one thousand men garrisoned Fort William Henry. It so happened that Webb started for Lake George, with an escort of two hundred men, under command of Major Putnam, at the very time Montcalm was embarking his army at the lower end of the lake. On his arrival at the fort, Putnam was sent to reconnoitre as far as Ticonderoga, and had proceeded part of the way, when he discovered the boats of the French moving slowly up the lake. Returning to the fort, Putnam informed Webb of the approach and strength of the enemy, and urged that the whole army should be brought forward immediately to repel their attack; but to this Webb would not consent. Enjoining secrecy upon Putnam he returned, with dastard haste, to Fort Edward, from whence he sent Colonel Monro, with one thousand men,

to reinforce and take command of the garrison at the lake.

Montcalm landed about the time of Colonel Monro's arrival, and immediately laid seige to the fort, at the same time sending proposals for its surrender. "I will defend my trust to the last," was the spirited reply of the brave Monro. The seige lasted six days, in the course of which the French General pushed his advances within musket shot of the fort, while a body of over five thousand Regulars, Canadians and Indians, under de Levy and de la Corne held the road leading to Fort Edward in rear of the English works. Then it was that Monro, finding his provisions and ammunition nearly exhausted, and having received a letter from his pusillanimous Chief declining to send him further assistance, consented to surrender. By the terms of capitulation the English were to march out with their arms and baggage, and were to be escorted by a detachment of French troops as far as Fort Edward; the sick and wounded remaining under Montcalm's protection until their recovery, when they were to be allowed to return to their homes.

At the time of the capitulation four hundred and fifty-nine English occupied the fort, while seventeen hundred and fifty were posted in a fortified camp standing on an eminence to the east, now marked by the ruins of Fort George. The troops marched out of the works on the morning of the 10th of August, and had scarcely passed the gates, when they were attacked by a large party of Indians attached to the French army. These savages rushed on with the fury of demons. Men, women and children were murdered in cold blood, and in the most barbarous manner. The massacre continued until the English had proceeded half way to Fort Edward, when the scattered and terrified troops were met by an escort of five hundred men, sent out for their protection. The French officers endeavored in vain to arrest the terrible onslaught. "Kill me," cried Montcalm, baring his breast, "but spare the English who are under my protection." The appeal was in vain. The vindictive savages had tasted

blood, and neither prayers, nor menaces nor promises availed while a victim was to be found.*

Immediately after the victory the fort was levelled to the ground; the cannon and stores were removed to Ticonderoga and the boats and vessels taken to the lower end of the lake. Thus closed the military operations of the year. The French returned to resume their labor upon the walls of Carillon, Webb shrunk back to Albany and the timid deer again drank, undisturbed, of the cool waters of the silver Horicon.

The British Government decided to press the campaign of the succeeding year (1758) with uncommon vigor. Twelve thousand troops were to attempt the reduction of Louisburg on the island of Cape Breton, sixteen thousand were to march against Ticonderoga and Crown Point, and eight thousand were to attack Fort du Quesne. The command of the troops destined for Lake Champlain was entrusted to Major General Abercrombie, who had succeeded the imbecile Loudon to the chief command in America.

On the first of July, six thousand three hundred and sixty-seven Regulars and nine thousand and twenty-four Provincials were collected around the decaying ruins of Fort William Henry. Four days later the whole armament struck their tents, and in nine hundred bateau and one hundred and thirty-five whale boats embarked on the waters of Lake George; a large number of rafts, armed with artillery and loaded with provisions, accompanied the expedition. That night the proud host rested for five hours on Sabbath Day Point, and, early on the morning of the 6th, reached the landing at the lower end of the lake.

Fort Carillon, against which the English were now advancing, stood near the point of the peninsula formed by the junction of the outlet of Lake George with Lake Champlain. This peninsula contains about five hundred acres,

*Bancroft's History of U. S. Vol. 4. Conquest of Canada, Vol. 2. Williams' Vermont, Vol. 2.

and is surrounded on three sides by water. One half of the western or land side was then covered by a swamp. The fort was nearly one hundred feet above the water, and stood on the south side of the peninsula adjoining the outlet, which here expands into a bay of some size. On the extreme easternmost point of the peninsula, at a short distance from the main work, was a strong redoubt of earth and stones, which commanded the narrow part of the lake. A battery also stood on the bank of the bay, a short distance west of the fort, while the low land to the north was covered by two batteries, standing behind its walls. The road from Lake George to Ticonderoga crossed the river or outlet, twice, by bridges. Near the lower bridge, and less than two miles from the fort, the French had built saw-mills, which were defended by a slight military work. They had also built a log camp near the landing at the foot of Lake George.

To oppose the powerful army now advancing against them, the French had only twenty-eight hundred Regulars and four hundred and fifty Canadians. But Montcalm was not the man to hesitate. The apparent hopelessness of resistance excited him to action. With consummate judgment he marked out his lines, half a mile west of the fort, and pushed the work with such ardor that, in ten hours, a wall as many feet high had been thrown up across the high ground which lay between the swamp and the bank of the outlet. On the 1st of July three regiments, under M. de Bourlemaque, occupied the log camp at the foot of the lake, while the battalion of la Barre was posted near the mills. When the English first appeared in sight, Bourlemaque fell back upon the mills, leaving Captain de Trepeze, with three hundred men, to watch the approaching column.

Immediately on landing, Abercrombie, leaving his baggage, provisions and artillery in the boats, formed his men into three columns and advanced towards Ticonderoga. The route lay through a thick and tangled wood which prevented any regular progress, and the troops, misled by the bewildered

guides, were soon thrown into confusion. While thus pressing forward in disorder, the head of the advance column, under Lord Howe, fell in with a party of the French troops, who had lost their way likewise, and a warm skirmish ensued. At the first fire the gallant Howe fell and instantly expired. He was the idol of the army and had endeared himself to the men by his affability and virtues. Infuriated by the loss of their beloved leader, his men rushed forward and swept the French from the field. Abercrombie's bugles now sounded the retreat, and the fatigued soldiers returned to the landing place, where they encamped for the night.

Early on the morning of the 7th, Lieutenant Colonel Bradstreet moved forward with a strong party and took possession of the saw-mills, while Abercrombie again formed his men in order of battle, and prepared to advance against the French works. But the attack was not made until the morning of the 8th, when the whole army was brought up, except a small detachment left to guard the boats, and a Provincial regiment stationed at the saw-mills. Montcalm had that morning received a reinforcement of four hundred men, under M. de Levy, which increased his force to about thirty-six hundred. Behind the newly erected lines, which were now strengthened by a wide and difficult abattis, he posted the tried battalions of la Reine, la Sarre, Bearn, Guiene, Berry, Languedoc and Roussillon, and calmly awaited the onset.

As the English approached, the rangers, light Infantry, bateau men and Ruggles', Doley's, Partridge's, Williams' and Bagley's regiments of Provincials, with a battalion of the New York regiment, took post in front, out of cannon-shot of the French works. Next came the Regulars destined for the attack, while the Connecticut and New Jersey troops were drawn up in the rear. At one o'clock the English bugles sounded to attack, when the regular battalions moved forward with quick and steady step—the veteran fifty-fifth leading, closely followed by the gallant Colonel Graham, at

the head of Murray's Highlanders. As the columns approached, and when the ranks became entangled among the logs and fallen trees which protected the breastwork, Montcalm opened a galling fire of artillery and musketry, which mowed down the brave officers and men by hundreds. For four hours the English vainly strove to cut their way through the impenetrable abattis, until Abercrombie, despairing of success, and having already lost nineteen hundred and forty-four men in killed and wounded, ordered a retreat. Montcalm did not pursue, for the English still outnumbered him four fold. Having refreshed his exhausted soldiers, he employed the night in strengthening his lines—a useless labor, for the frightened Abercrombie did not stop until he reached the head of Lake George, and, even then, he sent his artillery and ammunition to Albany for safety.*

Soon after the retreat of the English, Majors Putnam and Rodgers were sent, with their rangers, towards the head of Lake Champlain, to watch the movements of a party of five hundred Canadians and Indians, who, it was understood, intended to pass up the lake from Ticonderoga, under command of the famous Marin. Rodgers, with the main body, took a position near Wood Creek, about twelve miles from its mouth, while Putnam, with thirty-five men, took post on the bold rocky shore of the lake about half a mile north of the Creek. Near the edge of these rocks he constructed a wall of stones, and placed young trees before it in such a manner as completely to hide the defense from the water below. Learning, four days afterwards, that the enemy were approaching, under cover of the night, Putnam called in his sentinels and stationed his men where their fire would prove most effective; ordering them to remain perfectly quiet until they received his orders. The canoes advanced in solemn silence, and had passed the wall of stone, when they became alarmed by a slight noise, caused by one of

*Abercrombie's Dispatch—Conquest of Canada. Bancroft's History of the United States. Williams' Vermont, &c.

Putnam's men carelessly striking his gun against a stone. Crowding together beneath the rocks, a brief consultation was held by the party, when the canoes were turned back towards Ticonderoga. As they turned, Putnam gave the order to fire. This fire was returned from the lake, and for a short time the contest was warmly kept up on both sides. Great was the carnage among the canoes, which lay exposed upon the smooth surface of the water. Marin at length withdrew and landed his men a short distance below, intending to surround the rangers; but Putnam was upon the alert and immediately withdrew towards Fort Edward. While retreating through the thick forest an unexpected enemy fired upon the party, and wounded one man. Putnam instantly ordered his men to charge, when his voice was recognized by the leader of the other party, who cried out, "Hold, we are friends." "Friends or foes," answered Putnam, "you deserve to perish for doing so little execution with so fair a shot." The party proved to be a detachment sent to cover his retreat.

A few days afterwards, Putnam was taken prisoner by some of the Indians attached to Marin's command. The Indians bound Putnam to a tree. A young savage then amused himself by seeing how near he could throw a tomahawk to his prisoner's head, without touching it—the weapon struck in the tree a number of times, at a hair's breadth from the mark. When the Indian had finished this novel, but, to one of the parties, not very agreeable sport, a Canadian came up, snapped his fusee at Putnam's breast, then violently and repeatedly pushed the muzzle against his ribs, and finally gave him a severe blow on the jaw with the but-end of the gun. Putnam was then stripped of his clothes and taken to the place selected for their night encampment, where the Indians determined to roast him alive. For this purpose they bound him to a tree, piled dried bushes in a circle around him, and then set fire to the pile. At the moment when Putnam began to feel the scorching heat, and

had resigned himself to the keen agonies of certain death, Marin rushed through the crowd, opened a way, by scattering the burning brands, and unbound the victim.*

This humane officer, having reprimanded the savages in severe terms, took Putnam under his own protection and delivered him to Montcalm, by whom he was sent to Montreal. —Thus, through hardships, privations and blood, were the sturdy Provincials schooled for the great and heroic deeds of the American Revolution.

*Thacher's Military Journal.

CHAPTER V.

General Amherst marches against Ticonderoga and Crown Point—Retreat of the French to Canada—Naval operations on Lake Champlain—Progress of the settlement of the country bordering on Lake Champlain, prior to the revolution—New Hampshire Grants—Dispute with tenants of Colonel Reed—A new Province projected by Colonel Skene and others.

Notwithstanding the great importance attached by the Provincial and Home Governments to the control of Lake Champlain—the key of Canada—three campaigns, under three different Generals, had been undertaken without any progress towards the attainment of that object. Johnson was inefficient, Webb pusillanimous and Abercrombie wanting in military skill and firmness. The first halted his army to build a fort when he should have captured one; the second, with four thousand men under his immediate command, abandoned the brave Monro to the tomahawk of the merciless savage; while Abercrombie, though far superior to both, by a false move and "the extremest fright and consternation," allowed less than four thousand men to repel the advance of fifteen thousand troops, truly said to have been "the largest and best apportioned army in America." Success, however, had attended the British arms in other quarters. Louisburg capitulated to General Amherst in July, and in November General Forbes was in possession of Fort du Quesne.

Pitt, the then English Secretary of State, had long desired the conquest of Canada, and was determined to leave no efforts untried to accomplish that object. Fully appreciating the skill, bravery and activity of Amherst, he appointed him to the chief command in America. Amherst entered upon his work with zeal. Wolfe was placed in command

of one expedition destined to the attack of Quebec; Prideaux was sent with another against Niagara, while the Commander-in-Chief led a third in person, against the French posts on Lake Champlain.

Montcalm was indefatigable in his preparations for the approaching struggle. Three armed vessels were built to command the navigation of Lake Champlain, and the strong walls of Carillon again echoed with the noise of workmen. Still the French General, sorely pressed on every side, feared for the safety of that post. He could spare but few troops for its defence, and besides he well knew that its batteries were commanded by the controlling summit of Mount Defiance. "Had I to besiege Fort Carillon," said he the year before, while wondering at the retreat of Abercrombie, "I would ask but six mortars and two pieces of artillery."* Bourlemaque was sent forward to protect the fort with three battalions of Regulars and a body of Canadians and Indians, but he received instructions, at the same time, if nesessary to blow up the works on the approach of the English, to retire to Isle Aux Noix and there make a strong resistance.

On the 21st of June, Amherst reached the head of Lake George with an army of six thousand men, where he remained for a month, waiting for the remainder of the troops to come up. On the 21st he embarked with fifty-seven hundred and forty-three Regulars and five thousand two hundred and seventy-nine Provincials, and crossing the lake in four columns landed, the next day, near the spot where Abercrombie had disembarked the year before. That night his army lay under arms at the saw-mills, while the French held their old lines in force. On the night of the 23d, de Bourlemaque withdrew his men and leaving a party of four hundred in Fort Carillon, to mask his retreat, embarked with the main body for Crown Point. The English Grenadiers immediately occupied the deserted intrenchments.

*Bancroft's History of U. S.

During the 24th and 25th, the French kept up a continuous fire upon the English camp, which was warmly returned. In the mean time, Amherst advanced his approaches within six hundred yards of the fort, and was prepared to assault the works, but the French, having now held their opponents at bay long enough to secure the retreat of de Bourlemaque, prepared to blow up and abandon them. Several mines were constructed under the walls and a fuse connected with the powder magazine. At ten o'clock, on the night of the 26th, they sprung the mine and hastily retreated to their boats.* The explosion scattered the flames in every direction—breastworks, barracks and store-houses were consumed, while the report of the bursting guns, following each other in quick succession, announced to the retreating French the progress of the work of destruction.

Amherst immediately commenced repairing the fort, the stone work of which remained mostly uninjured. He also sent forward Major Rodgers, with two hundred rangers, to examine the position of the French at Crown Point, and to seize, and, at all hazards, hold some strong post near the fort. But this haste was useless, for before the Rangers could reach their post, the French had destroyed the fort, burned the surrounding settlements and retreated to Isle Aux Noix. The glory of St. Frederic was gone:

> "Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
> An hour's importance to the poor man's heart."

On the 4th of August, Amherst reached Crown Point with the main army and immediately traced out the lines of a new fort, about two hundred yards west of the old French works. This fort, although never completed, is said to have cost the English Government over two millions of pounds sterling. The ramparts were about twenty-five feet thick and nearly the same in height and were built of solid masonry. The curtains varied in length, from fifty-two to one

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hundred yards, and the whole circuit, measuring around the ramparts and including the bastions, was eight hundred and fifty-three yards. A broad ditch surrounded the work. On the north was a gate, and from the north-east bastion a covered way leading to the water.

While engaged upon this work, Amherst directed Captain Loring, who superintended the naval operations on the lake, to build with the greatest dispatch a sloop of sixteen guns, a radeau or raft eighty-four feet long, capable of carrying six large cannon, and a brigantine. These were completed by the 11th of October, when the English Commander embarked his whole army in bateau and started for Canada. Towards the evening of the next day the wind commenced blowing a gale, and the general was obliged to anchor his bateau under the west shore of the lake. Captain Loring, however, kept at sea with his armed vessels, and at daylight in the morning, discovered the French about forty-five miles down the lake. He immediately gave chase and drove a schooner and three sloops under shelter of Valcour Island. Two of the vessels were here sunk, while the other was run aground by her crew, who escaped into the woods.* The schooner escaped during the night.

Amherst, after remaining wind-bound for several days, again started for Canada, but he had scarcely reached Valcour Island, when the autumn winds threatened to swamp his vessels. Satisfied that he could accomplish nothing at that late and inclement season of the year, he now abandoned the enterprise and returned to winter quarters at Crown Point, where he arrived on the 21st of October.

While Amherst was at Crown Point he opened a road from that place to "No 4" on the Connecticut river, and also planned an expedition against the St. Francis Indians, who lived on the east side of the St. Lawrence, near Three Rivers. The command of this expedition was entrusted to Major

*See Brasier's Map of Lake Champlain, where the north end of Valcour Island is designated as the place where "the French sunk their vessel in 1759."

Rodgers of the New Hampshire troops, who, in October, left Crown Point in bateau, with two hundred men. This number was afterwards, by an accident, reduced to one hundred and forty-two, with whom Rodgers proceeded to Missisco Bay, where he concealed his boats and a portion of his provisions and started by land for the Indian village. The expedition was successful. After reducing the village to ashes, Rodgers and his men returned to Crown Point by the way of the Connecticut River.

In August 1760, Colonel Haviland left Crown Point at the head of fifteen hundred regular troops, eighteen hundred Provincials and some Indians, and on the 16th of that month, encamped opposite the French post at Isle Aux Noix, and by the 24th, opened a fire of mortars upon it. Three days after, M. de Bougainville, the Commandant, withdrew from the Island leaving a garrison of only thirty men, who immediately surrendered.* On the 8th of September, Cononel Haviland joined Amherst and Murray, under the walls of Montreal. That same day the city was surrendered by Vaudreuil. By this act the French dominion in Canada ceased, and by the treaty of peace signed in Paris on the 10th day of February, 1763, that Province was formally ceded to Great Britain. This, says Mr. Smollet,† "was a conquest the most important of any that ever the British army achieved, whether we consider the safety of the British Colonies in America, now secured from invasion and encroachment; the extent and fertility of the country subdued; or the whole Indian commerce thus transferred to Great Britain."

When the French army retreated to Canada, it was accompanied by the few inhabitants residing upon the borders of the lake. There was, however, at this time, a settlement of French and Indians at Swanton Falls in Vermont, several miles east of the lake, containing a small church, a saw-mill

*Conquest of Canada. Williams History of Vermont.

†History of England.

and about fifty huts, which was not abandoned by them until the year 1775.*

In the course of the year 1760, the New England troops frequently passed over the road opened by Amherst from the lake to the Connecticut, and thus became acquainted with the fertility and value of the lands in that section. These lands were soon sought out and settled upon.

The lands north of Crown Point, although equally fertile, were more remote and did not as early attract the attention of the pioneer or speculator. They, however, came into notice gradually, so that several permanent settlements were made along the borders of the lake, during the fifteen years which intervened between the expulsion of the French and the commencement of the revolutionary war.

In 1766, Colonel Ephraim Doolittle, Paul Moore, Marshall Newton and others settled in the town of Shoreham, and, in the same year, Donald McIntosh, a native of Scotland, moved into the the town of Vergennes. A saw-mill was erected at the lower falls of Otter Creek as early as 1769, and shortly afterwards a grist-mill was built at the same place.

Some years before the commencement of the revolutionary war, two Germans by the name of Logan and Pottier settled upon the points of land, in the town of Shelburne, known as Pottier's Point and Logan's Point. They were engaged in getting out timber for the Canadian market, and are said to have been murdered near the north end of the lake, by a party of soldiers sent out from Montreal to escort them home, on their return with the avails of a raft which they had sold. Soon after their death, about ten families settled in the town, among whom were Thomas and Moses Pierson.

John Strong, Zadock Everest and a Mr. Ward commenced a settlement in the town of Addison, on the opposite side of the lake from Crown Point, in 1769 or 1770. A set-

*Thompson's Gazetteer.

tlement was also commenced in 1770, in the town of Panton, by John Pangborn and Odle Squires, who were afterwards joined by Timothy Spaulding, Peter Ferris and others. Ferris resided at the bay in which Arnold burned his vessels during the revolutionary war.

The town of Bridport was first settled, in 1768, by Philip Stone, of Groton Massachusetts. About the same time, two families by the name of Richardson and Smith moved into the township and commenced a settlement, under New York titles, and were followed by Towner, Chipman and Plumer, who held grants from the Governor of New Hampshire. In 1773, Samuel Smith moved his family into the town and was followed during the following winter by Mr. Victory. A settlement was commenced at the lower falls on the Winooski River by Ira Allen and Remember Baker, in 1773.*

These settlements were all on the eastern border of the lake. A few improvements had also been commenced on the New York side, which were principally confined to the grants made, by the colony of New York, to the officers and soldiers who had served in the wars against the French and Indians. The most important of these, lying north of Crown Point, was at the Bouquet River where William Gilliland had erected a saw-mill, and where several persons, including Gilliland, Watson, Scarr, Cross, Blood and McCawley resided.

William Hay and Henry Cross, lived on a tract of land granted, in 1765, to Lieutenant Friswell. Hay's house stood near the shore of the lake opposite Valcour Island. From this house his family watched the progress of the naval engagement between the American and British fleet, 11th Oct. 1776, and witnessed Arnold's masterly retreat during the following night. Before the Revolution, the few inhabitants residing at the north end of the lake received their supplies from Montreal, which they were in the habit of visiting sev-

*For further information in relation to the first settlement of the towns on the eastern border of the lake, see Thompson's Gazetteer of Vermont.

eral times in the course of the summer months. About the 1st of June, 1775, Mr. Hay went to Montreal to purchase a supply of flour, and was there arrested and thrown into prison by order of General Carleton. He remained in prison several days, but was at length liberated at the solicitation of the merchants of that city. Mr. Hay, on his return, repaired to Crown Point, and gave information to the American Commander as to the strength and plans of the Indians, which was considered of great importance at the time. He also brought the first news of Carleton's efforts to enlist the Caughnawagas on the side of the English. For some reason he was afterwards suspected of holding communication with the English. In July, 1776, while his wife and his children lay sick of the small pox, Hay was arrested and sent to Crown Point, by order of General Sullivan; Cross accompanied him. "These men are suspected of being inimical to us and have it in their power to give intelligence to the enemy," was the reason assigned for their arrest.

As early as 1763, one John la Frombois, a native of Canada, accompanied by two men named Goude and Savarte, visited the shores of the lake and remained a short time in the present town of Chazy, Clinton County. La Frombois returned to Canada in 1768, and obtained permission from Francis McKay to settle on a tract which McKay pretended to claim by virtue of an assignment of the old French grant to la Gauchetiere.* Under this license la Frombois took possession of what are now lots numbers seventy and seventy-two, in Dean's Patent, and built a house on number seventy-two, where he remained until 1776, when he was driven off by the English and his house burned. He returned in 1784, after the war, rebuilt his house and remained in possession of the lot until his death in 1810. Joseph la Monte (now

*See Chap. 3. La Gauchetiere assigned to Estebe, in 1746, who sold to de Pontbriant, Bishop of Quebec, in December, 1757. Pontbriant afterwards conveyed to de Montgolfier, Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, who, in 1768, released to McKay, as one of the heirs at law of the Bishop, de Pontbriant.

Monty) moved on to a lot near la Frombois', in 1774, which he abandoned two years afterwards, and reclaimed after the war. His descendants still reside upon the same land.

After la Frombois' first visit, but before his actual location in 1768, Charles de Fredenburgh, a needy German nobleman, who, in 1766, had received from the English Government a warrant for thirty thousand acres of land, lying on the river Saranac, moved on to the tract and built a house and saw-mill there. De Fredenburgh remained on this tract until about the time of the commencement of the Revolution, when he removed his family to Montreal. He soon after returned to protect his property, and had been back but a short time, when the house and mill were burned down. Fredenburgh disappeared at the same time and was supposed to have been murdered. The saw-mill stood on a fall of the Saranac, two miles above its mouth.

In 1761, Philip K. Skene, an English Major under half pay, who had been with Amherst in 1759, established a large Colony near the mouth of Wood Creek. In the autumn, Skene accompanied an expedition against Havana, and on his return, in 1763, found the settlement reduced to fifteen persons. He immediately set about re-establishing the colony, and, in 1765, obtained patents for twenty-five thousand acres of land lying on and near the Creek. Here he built a stone mansion forty feet by thirty, and two stories and a half in height. In 1770, he built a large stone building one hundred and thirty feet long, which was used for a military garrison and depot. He also built at this place a stone forge of about the same dimensions as his house, where he commenced the manufacture of iron. This was the first forge erected on the borders of the lake. Skene owned a sloop, with which he kept up a constant communication with Canada, and, at his own expense, cut a road through the wilderness as far as Salem, a distance of about thirty miles, from which point it was continued by others to Bennington. This road was used during the season when the navigation

on the lake was closed by ice. In 1773, Skenesborough contained a population of 379.*

The causes which had formerly prevented the occupancy of the fertile lands of the Champlain valley were removed when the whole country came into the possession of the English Government, by the Conquest of Canada in 1760. But other difficulties almost immediately sprang up to retard the growth of this section, originating in the conflicting claims of the English Colonists to the sovereignty of that portion of the valley lying east of the lake. The colony of New York claimed jurisdiction as far east as the Connecticut River, while New Hampshire asserted her right as far west as the shores of the lake and, south of the lake, to a line running parallel to and twenty miles east of the Hudson River. Both Colonies frequently issued grants for the same territory; causing much confusion in the land titles and creating great animosity between the rival claimants.

Prior to the close of the year 1763, the Governor of New Hampshire had granted charters to different persons for fourteen towns lying along and adjoining the east shore of the lake, and, by similar grants, had asserted the right of that Colony to the whole territory claimed to be within her jurisdiction. On the other side, the colony of New York issued grants of land on the lake to eighty-one or more reduced officers, who had served in the French and Indian wars; nearly one-half of which were located on the east side of the lake. The Colony had also appropriated a large tract, lying between Otter Creek and Mallet's Bay, for the disbanded soldiers of those wars. A county had also been organized by New York, called Charlotte County, which extended, on the north, from Lake Memphremagog to the St. Regis River, and stretched south, on both sides of the lake, far beyond its

*See a petition to Governor Tryon, praying that Skenesborough might be made the Shiretown of Charlotte County. The petition is signed by thirty-eight "inhabitants of Crown Point district and Ticonderoga." These thirty-eight probably, included all the settlers in the vicinity of those posts, on both sides of the lake.—Documentary History of New York, Vol. 4.

southern extremity; the county seat was fixed at Skenesboro'.

The efforts of New York to extend its jurisdiction to the east was met, from the first, by a most decided opposition on the part of the people. Conventions were called to devise means to protect the New Hampshire claimants in their rights, committees of safety were organized and the law officers and land surveyors of New York were driven by force from the disputed territory. These disputes were generally confined to the southern part of Vermont. Occasionally, however, they extended as far north as the grants upon the lakes.

In 1761, the Governor of New Hampshire granted a tract of land, lying around the lower falls of Otter Creek, (Vergennes,) to several persons, who moved there and, as early as 1769, had erected a saw-mill at the falls. Soon after the erection of the mill, Lieutenant Colonel John Reed, who had formerly commanded the forty-second Royal Highland Regiment, and who held a claim to the same land under the colony of New York, forcibly drove off the New Hampshire settlers and put about fifteen families, his own tenants, in possession. These last extended the settlements and had erected several log houses and a grist-mill, when they were in turn ordered off by a party of "Green Mountain Boys," who burned the houses, destroyed the grist mill and put the New Hampshire claimants again in possession.

In June, 1773, Colonel Reed persuaded a number of Scotch emigrants who had lately arrived at New York, including John Cameron, James Henderson, Donald McIntosh, John Bardans and Angus McBean, to accompany him to Otter Creek for the purpose of retaking possession of these lands. On their arrival they found Joshua Hyde and several other persons in possession, with whom Reed entered into an arrangement by which Hyde and his associates were to give up quiet possession of the lands and to allow Reed's tenants to retain the same, until the dispute as to title should be decided by the English Government. Colonel Reed paid

£61. 16s. for the crops and improvements, repaired the grist mill and also purchased a quantity of provisions and some cows for the use of his tenants. He then left them and returned to New York.

This arrangement, although made with the consent of the New Hampshire claimants, was disapproved by the committee of safety, who sent Ethan Allen, Seth Warner and Remember Baker, with a party of about one hundred "Green Mountain Boys" to Otter Creek for the purpose of driving off the Scotch occupants. On the 11th of August, Allen's party, attended by Hyde—the same person who two months before had sold his claim to Colonel Reed—arrived at the settlements, drove the Scotch from their dwellings, burned the hay and corn and five houses, and then tore down the grist-mill, breaking the mill-stones in pieces and throwing them over the bank into the Creek. Cameron and his companions remained at Otter Creek about two weeks longer and then returned to New York. After their departure a small block house was erected at the falls, which was garrisoned and afterwards used as a protection to the New Hampshire claimants. Another block house was soon after built near the falls of the Winooski River.

During the controversy between the settlers under the New Hampshire grants and the colony of New York, a project was started by Major Skene and others to form that part of New York, lying east of the Hudson River, into a new Province. To effect this object Skene visited England, and in March, 1775, wrote back that he had been appointed Governor of Crown Point and Ticonderoga, and should soon call on the people for an address to show their loyalty to the King. During the absence of Skene the troubles on the grants had increased to an alarming extent, and it is extremely doubtful what would have been the result of the contest, had not the commencement of the American Revolution turned the attention of all parties to the common cause of the Country.

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